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FALL EDUCATION ISSUE

Are vouchers the answer?
Is Jesse Jackson the answer?
Is a new Dept. of Education the answer?
(It may depend on what is the question.)

Three analyses in this issue

FRANK GETLEIN SAYS NOT THE ANSWER. **THOMA** ERS AREN'T THE ANSWE ABSENCE. **COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.** FINDS THAT THE ANSWER IS WOODY ALLEN. **WOODY ALLEN?**

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CORRESPONDENCE

Paul VI

Chicago, Ill.

To the Editors: One would think that an editorial titled "The Death of the Pope" [Aug. 18] would have elicited a modicum of good sense from any writer in a magazine purporting to be what *Commonweal* thinks it is. It is another example that can only merit contempt for the cynic, callow, calumnious, cavilling concatenation of rubbish that you have been propounding for the past ten years to discredit this good Pontiff and foster the division in the American Church over *Humanae Vitae*—as though a man's or mankind's life is placed below his belly button. You'll laugh at that! But —to coin a phrase—"in the long run" you will finally discover that you are the avatars of agrophobia never having left your little elitist nest, but have allowed your flyspecked pages to masquerade as divine afflatus.

(REV.) MARK HEGENER, OFM
Managing Director
Franciscan Herald Press

Milwaukee, Wis.

To the Editors: Heartiest congratulations on your excellent editorial on the death of Pope Paul [Aug. 18].

I looked forward to the first issue of your publication to come out after his death, for I knew it would contain a worthy tribute to this great man. I was not disappointed; I did not expect to be.

If I can presume to sit in judgment over the literary output of writers of such caliber as those who contribute to *Commonweal,* I consider your article beautiful, comprehensive, fair, just; and, above all, respectful and understanding of the weak and strong points that were apparent in the reign of this beloved Pontiff.

Your article will probably do much to keep alive the memory of Pope Paul and deepen appreciation for the self-sacrificing efforts he made to guide the Church along its way in these troubled times.

SISTER EMILY CLEARY, OSF

Rights & Wrongs

Croton-on-Hudson, N.Y.

To the Editors: John Cort's prominent reference to my participation in the Christian-Marxist dialogue at Rosemont College (July 21 issue) distorted the meaning of my words but, more important, did not put them in context: he did not mention the thematic subject around which I brought in the question of human rights and democracy in the United States and the Soviet Union.

That subject was the primacy of the issue of disarmament and the use of the "human rights" issue by its opponents. I considered it especially vital for a conference sponsored by an organization devoted to relations with European socialist countries, and focusing on peace and disarmament issues.

Since I read my talk from a prepared text, what follows is, I believe, an accurate rendition of the relevant part of my talk:

"The Carter Administration has used its human rights propaganda line to strengthen anti-Sovietism. . . .

"We do have to recognize that the standards of human rights and duties in a socialist society differ from those in a capitalist society. They include a wide range of economic and cultural rights which are realized in practice and of which the majority are deprived under capitalism. They include a different range of democratic rights than under capitalism and, I believe, a more effective range. They also include those civil rights analogous to those embodied in our own Bill of Rights, with a national security proviso.

"The practical limitations on freedom of speech, etc., in the Soviet Union are, in principle, justifiable in a world of Radio Liberty, of U.S. nuclear-armed bases surrounding the USSR, of the CIA lie and subversion and assassination machine making the Soviet Union its main target. There's no question in my mind that these limitations will dwindle in direct proportion to the progress of détente and disarmament.

"There is an objective criterion—the United Nations covenants on human rights, which have been ratified by most governments, but which have not been submitted to Congress and are virtually a secret document in this country—as are the real terms of the Helsinki accords.

"Lenin said the Soviet state is a thousand times more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois republic. Examination of the whole range of rights in these UN covenants, and comparison with the reality that exists, shows that the Soviet Union comes a thousand times closer to the UN covenants then any bourgeois democracy, including particularly the United States.

"As for specific charges of this or that violation of human rights in the Soviet Union, a serious violation of *our* freedom of the press is the suppression in the United States of the complete, detailed Soviet refutation of most of these charges.

"It's important that we all see this. But to the extent that we do not, it remains absolutely essential that we do not permit our differences to deter us from uniting around the central task of fighting for disarmament and détente and non-intervention."

As matters turned out, I consider that I was well advised to deal with the subject of anti-Sovietism as a major obstacle to peace. The announced theme of the conference was "The U.S. Socio-Economic Order in the Next Decade" and surely the arms race and the war danger will be vital to those prospects. In fact, others besides myself noted the failure of most speakers to address themselves to the subject of peace and disarmament. But anti-Soviet attitudes were a leit-motif of several speakers, beginning with Michael Harrington, whose engaging manner and sense of humor make his really extreme anti-Sovietism all the more dangerous. And extending to some of the members of the CAREE Board who served as moderators and used crude anti-Soviet jokes as their "chairman's humor." Mr. Cort himself, in a long and extremely inter-

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esting informal night session in the lounge, went into real McCarthyite extremes in this respect—insisting, for example, that the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (IND), which Cort had a certain role in splitting during the McCarthy period, is "loyal to the Soviet Union."

As for my reaction to Mr. Hruby's anti-Soviet tirade, it evolves that I hit a bull's eye in my guess that he was a Czarist émigré counterrevolutionary: he is an editor of one of their publications!

Let me say that I considered the conference as a whole extremely valuable, and in particular the openness of its sponsors to a wide variety of views and the spirit of participation among the registrants, which made for constructive dialogue in formal and informal gatherings. VICTOR PERLO

Reply

Victor Perlo is well-advised to criticize the U.S. for not ratifying the UN covenants on human rights. I suspect that some of this reluctance is related to our refusal to do something meaningful about the right to a job. But if the Soviet Union has endorsed this right, it does not therefore follow that the Soviets are "a thousand times more democratic than any bourgeois democracy."

Our press is free enough and our observation and experience clear enough to refute that kind of absurdity. What is most depressing about Mr. Perlo's letter is that it continues and compounds a lamentable confusion, much in evidence at Rosemont, about the meaning of democracy. It is flattering to democracy that everybody wants to march behind its banner, but it would be more flattering if they would just take the trouble to learn what it is. The Soviet Union is not a very good model, which is not to say that the U.S. is the best possible model either, particularly in the area of economic democracy.

I can no longer speak with confidence about the current loyalities of the leadership of the United Electrical Radio & Machine Workers, and did

(Continued on page 639)

CORRESPONDENCE: 610 **EDITORIAL:** 611
WASHINGTON REPORT: Unlucky Number: Proposition 13: *Frank Getlein* 612
GRADUATING OUT AND GRADUATING IN: *Brian Wicker* 614
ANOTHER CHANCE FOR VOUCHERS?: *Mary Ellen Leary* 616
JESSE JACKSON'S GAME PLAN: *John Druska* 623
EDUCATION IN THE CABINET: *George Elford* 626
THE PRESS: No News Is Bad News: *Thomas Powers* 628
THE SCREEN: Tested Mettle: *Colin L. Westerbeck, Jr.* 630
A DISTASTE FOR CANT, AN EAR FOR PROSE: *Margaret Wimsatt* 632
BOOKS: *Joseph Blenkinsopp, Gary MacEoin, John Fludas, Steve Lawson, Joshua Leinsdorf* 634
ILLUSTRATIONS: *Cover I: From Americana Review, Scotia, N.Y.*

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A FRAMEWORK FOR PEACE

The Mid East Summit began with severe handicaps. President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin came to the talks with sharply different aims. The Jewish leader had a modest goal: he said he would consider the conference a success if there was an agreement to schedule further talks. Sadat, however, had larger ideas: under pressure from the other Arab states to give up his peace initiative, he said in advance that there must be substantial progress or his peace efforts would be at an end. Two central issues confronted the conferees: the future of the West Bank and the future of the Palestinian people. On both issues the two leaders were publicly pledged to flatly opposed positions. Sadat demanded that Begin commit himself to Israeli withdrawal from all Arab occupied lands; Begin insisted that the West Bank was historically Jewish, and he was unyielding on the point—so much so that many people believed that no peace was possible in the Mid East while he was Prime Minister. Sadat emphasized the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination; Begin held out for continuing Israeli military supervision of the West Bank and under pressure conceded only that sovereignty could be discussed after five years.

Given this confrontation, compromise on both sides was essential. Begin had to say what if any security arrangements would lead to Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank; Sadat needed to spell out in public his private hints on how Israeli security might be achieved. Both sides had to back away from previously declared positions to some extent, or any talks would be futile. Before the Summit, affairs had reached an impasse. It was customary to call the Summit a gamble, and for President Carter the domestic political stakes were high, but in a larger sense there was no gamble; the Middle East peace initiative was at a standstill in any case and the

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Summit was a last-ditch effort to save it. In the light of all this, extraordinary expectations were highly optimistic, but contrary to most informed predictions they came true. The Summit accord establishes a framework for peace and commits Egypt and Israel to try to conclude a peace treaty within three months. This would be the first formal recognition of the Jewish state by any of its Arab neighbors since the creation of Israel in 1948. Israel agreed to end its military rule of the West Bank but is to be allowed to maintain security forces in specified bases. The one million Palestinians living on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip "will have the right to participate in the determination of their own future" during a five-year transition period. On the Sinai front, Israel would begin to withdraw its forces within three to nine months, with normal diplomatic relations to be established after the first major withdrawal. Some details remain to be spelled out, but the agreements, said Mr. Carter, "will provide that Israel may live in peace within secure borders."

At this writing certain important questions remain unanswered. The P.L.O. was not mentioned, nor were the 1.5 million Palestinians outside of the West Bank. Can the Israeli Knesset be counted on to make the specified withdrawal of Jewish settlements from the Sinai? Will King Hussein of Jordan enter the negotiations? How hostile will the Arab reaction be?

These are troublesome points. Nonetheless, barring unexpected hitches, it seems clear that we have witnessed a significant diplomatic breakthrough. A separate Israeli-Egyptian peace makes war very unlikely; without Egypt the Arab states cannot hope to take on Israel. Thus the Summit has turned out to be a major step on the road to peace in the Mid East, and for his central role President Carter deserves great credit.

STAFF CHANGES

For the first time in over eleven years, John Deedy's name does not appear on the masthead this week. In the issue where it first appeared—in May 1967—there were no less than two editorials and one article about the war in Vietnam; William Shannon's column predicted that a continuing war would swing the 1968 presidential elections from the Democrats to a Republican like Nixon; the lead article examined U.S. domination of developing economies; and another piece discussed the "secular ecumenism" of Paul VI's *Populorum Progressio*. These were exciting but hardly triumphant years for an editor at *Commonweal*. American liberalism was fragmenting, post-Conciliar optimism evaporating. Through it all, John Deedy carried on in a style that matched militancy with good humor, a zest for combat with personal gentleness and a refusal to take it all too seriously. While serving as Managing Editor, he also wrote several small and several large books, on matters religious, political, and literary. It is to this independent writing that he now plans to devote much more of his time. His talents and his presence will be greatly missed in *Commonweal*'s office.

Officially joining—or rejoining—*Commonweal*'s staff this week is Peter Steinfels. An editor here from 1964 to 1972, he has spent the intervening years completing a doctorate in European history; directing a program dealing with humanities, ethics and the life sciences; and editing the *Hastings Center Report*. He has written articles and reviews for numerous journals, edited a book of essays on death and dying, and contributed a regular column to these pages. His book on "neoconservatism" will appear next year. As Executive Editor, he will add to regular editorial functions special responsibilities for long-range editorial and financial planning.

WASHINGTON REPORT

UNLUCKY NUMBER: PROPOSITION 13

It is a Capitol Hill commonplace that any attempt at tax reform, especially any well-announced effort to close the famed "loopholes" through which the rich slip, wealth untaxed and intact, will ineluctably result in larger loopholes for richer slippers or slipperier richies. Even by that standard, however, there has rarely been a tax reform as blatantly dishonest as California's celebrated Proposition 13.

Needless to say, as social observers as various as W. C. Fields and H. L. Mencken noted years ago, neither the dishonesty nor the suicidal stupidity of Proposition 13 has prevented its passage in California, its emulation in a number of other states for the November ballot, and the appearance of federal analogues in several forms which almost certainly will take up a lot of time in the next Congress and may not inconceivably become law. Closer at hand, even as you read this, the television spectacular of the moment is the Proposition 13 Show, starring the proposition's progenitor, Howard Jarvis. The importance of that is unaffected by whether the show turns out to be a boom or a bomb. The point is that Jarvis's people were able to put together an ad hoc, coast-to-coast network for their show in very short order. Even for money, television license-holders are very loath to program anything they think will drive the suckers to the nearest game show. Clearly, a cross section of some of the most avaricious minds in the country believed immediately they could make money out of

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Jarvis, at least maintain, possibly increase, their numbers, and at the same time take credit for a public service. The interest is out there, all right.

Granted the interest, what a pity it got and is getting fobbed off with Proposition 13. What a further pity the defenders of fiscal sanity in California, when they finally got around to taking Jarvis-Gann seriously, counter-attacked essentially on grounds of principle and practicality rather than on the obvious grounds that the initiative promised a lot more than it would really deliver and that most of its deliveries would be to business and industry.

Proposition 13, or the Jarvis-Gann Initiative, is widely believed to cut back the taxes on real property and to keep them cut back. In actuality the new law doesn't quite work that way. It does indeed cut back property taxes levied by towns and cities for, in probably the overwhelming majority of cases, the overwhelming majority of their municipal income. California taxes are ordered to revert and have reverted to one percent of the March, 1975 assessments. In view of what has happened to land values in the last three years, that's a sizable cut. Moreover, the initiative also ordains that annual increases in the assessed value of real property are limited to two percent and here comes the escape clause: until properties are sold. At that point, the assessment can and will equal the real market value newly established by the sale.

What all the tumult and the shouting adds up to, therefore, is a one-time only tax windfall for homeowners. Granted the turnover pattern that has developed in American housing in recent years, perhaps a little more pronounced in California than in most other places, the tax easement is not going to last long nor be of anything like permanent significance for most homeowners, present or future. Especially future.

If residential properties have a high turnover, however, there are other properties that have a low rate of changing hands and here comes the hand-off. Right, it's business property that tends to stay put in the hands of the owners and at the address originally chosen. It is both easier and more common for an employee to be transferred or to get a job someplace else and hence to sell one house and buy another than it is for a business of any size to move to another location, buying and selling property in the process. Moreover, within business, it is easier and more common for small, retail businesses to move than it is for large retail, manufacturing or financial firms to arise and go. Thus it is reasonable to anticipate that in the municipal tax history of California in the last quarter of this century, the effects of Jarvis-Gann on tax receipts from residential property will appear as a bleep, admittedly a somewhat drawn-out one, but one strictly programmed to get taxes back to the status quo ante after the one big break. In business and industry, quite the other way; that ain't no bleep, it's an abrupt and largely permanent slide down. From another point of view, it is the exhilarating liberation of corporations from their previously crimping and cramping obligations to support their municipal governments, to pay for the services they receive, just like everybody else.

That this permanent windfall for business has been presented and passed in the name of the small homeowner is par for the course in these things. When any regulation or taxation of the most far-flung, elaborate industrial empire is being considered by legislative bodies, regulatory commissions, or courts, the corporate argument is always couched in terms of the tiny, struggling Mom 'n' Pop corner grocery store entangled in the toils of the monster bureaucracy. In reality, the situation more usually is one of an understaffed, underpaid guardian of the public interest surrounded and assaulted by the monster law-and-politics apparatus of a monster multinational disguising itself as the neighborhood deli.

Meanwhile, there had indeed been some unfairness in the growth of real property taxes in California in recent years. The growth took place more or less in the style of the growth of the water supply of the Sorcerer's Apprentice: an automaton system set in motion impossible to stop or even modify as it chugged along handling steeply increased values unthought of when the system started. Popular and to some extent justified home-owner resentment from that situation explains a lot of the support for Jarvis-Gann in California and makes easily predictable an even deeper homeowner resentment as it is discovered that, amazingly, the realtor and businessman behind the initiative have turned out to be benefiting realty and other business a lot more than they have those distraught home-owners.

What about the same sentiment elsewhere in the country? What about the federal level?

For one thing, a number of responsible black leaders, not given to knee-jerk reactions, have seriously accused the Jarvis-Gann movement of catering to racism. It's hard to refute the charge. The basic Jarvis-Gann attitude has been characterized as "Cut *my* taxes; cut *their* services." The *they* in that formula are largely blacks. And as the federal version emerges in the new Congress next January, it is a very safe bet that the same thing will be true. Governmental economy is always attractive and to some degree always possible, but if I could figure out a way to buy shares in waste and inefficiency, I'd do it like a shot, convinced the investment would be better than gold or Washington real estate, proof against any and all influences on other markets, a winner forever. Beyond marginal chipping away at good old waste and inefficiency, any real savings in government expenditures can only come from one of two places, health, education and welfare spending and armament spending. It is no coincidence that Representative Jack Kemp, one of the two sponsors of the first federal version of

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Proposition 13, was also one of the impassioned advocates of overriding Carter's veto of the Defense authorization bill and of building the new nuclear carrier.

Incidentally, one of the smartest conservative economists on the House staff says that Carter's veto of the Defense bill is the administration's most effective anti-inflation move to date, although obviously that was not what was in mind. At any rate, if the tax-cutting fever, when it reaches Washington, had any prayer of focusing in on the biggest government cause of inflation, namely arms spending, the whole thing would be worthwhile. As it is, the real targets, nationally as locally, will unquestionably be those most in need of help, the poor, downtrodden and oppressed. FRANK GETLEIN

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EDUCATION IN BRITAIN

GRADUATING OUT AND GRADUATING IN

In the last year or two I have been invited, either as a complacent parent or benevolent uncle, to a number of university "commencements." It is worth trying to distinguish two categories of these: on the one hand, the ceremonies of the provincial universities—say Birmingham, or Nottingham, or Sheffield—and on the other, those of Oxford and Cambridge. The difference is startling and I think significant.

At the provincial universities, the graduation ceremony is essentially a passing-out parade and a prize-giving. As parents, you sit in some huge hall, in massed ranks of chairs facing a platform. The graduands, dressed in all sorts of gear, but covered up with ill-fitting academic robes they don't quite know how to wear, sit at the front. Behind a big table, smothered with little scrolls and mementos shortly to be given out, sit the bigwigs of the university, including the Chancellor, or Very Important Person, who has made enough money, or been rewarded for "political services" enough, to have caught the university's attention as a suitable person to be its figurehead. A few distinguished people are first of all given their honorary degrees, after speeches in what I can only call "graduation prose," listing their extraordinary talents. After this comes the turn of the ordinary graduands. They troop up one by one onto the platform, in order of academic merit. That is, those with first-class degrees go up first, those with thirds or pass degrees bring up a bedraggled rear. Each shakes the Very Important Person's hand with one fist, while grasping the proffered certificate of achievement with the other. The men bow, the women tend to curtsy. Then they troop off on the other side of the platform. Afterwards there are sandwiches and tea in some commonroom, and chat with the professors. Cameras click, cars are filled with the accumulated bric-a-brac of three years, and that is it. Everyone goes home.

The main object of these weird ceremonies is fairly clear: it is to send each youngster out into the world with a ticket to a job (or a dole queue). Each is marked forever by a certain degree of merit. It is also an occasion for parents to peep into the world of the campus, often for the first time (since the majority have not had the benefit of a university education themselves), and congratulate themselves on their own vicarious achievement. Competition, grading and job-certification are the meat of the sandwich: the rest is mere packaging.

But at Cambridge (where I went some weeks back for another graduation) the ethos and the meaning are quite different. The building where the ceremony takes place is old and small (though it cannot compete with Oxford's tiny masterpiece by Wren, the Sheldonian Theatre). The parents have to queue (this year in the drizzle) because only a couple of colleges at a time can squeeze into the room. The graduands are introduced, not en masse, but in batches led by the hand according to their colleges, and the latter are invited by a complex set of precedents according to age of foundation and royal connections. Inside, the parents have to squeeze uncomfortably into hard seats in the inadequate galleries. It is obvious at once that they have no rights or privileges there: it is the university's occasion, not theirs. The graduands are then presented to the Vice-Chancellor (who is not a bigwig but simply the head of one of the colleges—they take it in turn). He sits, episcopally enthroned, before them and speaks to each of them softly in Latin. At various moments, robed academics remove their doctoral headgear and replace it: the whole thing is quite plainly a liturgical occasion. Then the graduands troop out in twos and threes, to be photographed on the lawns, with mothers who look as if they have just come over from Ascot, and fathers from their city banks. But this is not the end. Families now go off to the colleges of their offspring, to be shown over the priceless art-collections, and given salmon teas in marquees, or champagne in book-lined studies, or sherry in painted halls.

What is the meaning of this very different occasion? Well first of all, it is not a prize-giving. The competitive element is (seemingly) absent: the class of a person's degree goes unmentioned at the cere-

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mony, so that the spectator has no idea which of those being "graduated" has a first-class degree and which a third. For the moment, at any rate, all are on a par. But this is because the ceremony is not a *passing-out* parade, into the big world where competitive success is all: it is a *welcome in*. The degree-giving at Oxford or Cambridge is an initiation into the community of the university itself, of which hitherto the undergraduates were only probationary members. The liturgical trappings, the soft private speech in a dead language (accompanied by a kind of blessing by Vice-Chancellor—not a "secular" handshake, but a "sacred" holding of the graduand's hands within his own), the intimate scale of the proceedings—all are designed to show that the university is bestowing, not a certificate of competence in the world's sense, but the privilege of access into the community of the learned.

It would be easy to conclude, from this comparison between the prize-giving in the provinces and the initiation bestowed at "Oxbridge," that the latter exuded a kind of democratic spirit (a society in which all are equals) over against the graded competitive spirit of the former. And in a sense this is so. But then at Oxbridge, such "democracy" can be afforded. Within the intensely competitive world of these élite institutions, a sort of equality among the chosen can be practiced. One has only to step outside the picture-frame, however, to know how different is the reality. For it is a fact that the degree at Cambridge is a much better passport to a job, in a society of high unemployment even for the well-qualified, than the same degree at any other place. And this is not because of any intrinsic academic superiority. Thus at the time I write, my son—who has just left Cambridge—tells me that all of his friends have already got jobs, mostly in the sort of occupations they were seeking. But my niece, who has just graduated at Sheffield, tells me that she, along with many of her friends, will be leaving university for the dole queue, at least for some time to come.

The point I am making about the difference between Oxford and Cambridge, and the other universities, can be made, too, about schools in Britain. A recent newspaper story spoke of the *increasing* degree to which the older universities are drawing their students from the private (i.e. the so-called "public" or "independent") schools. The financing of the ancient universities in Britain is tending to make this tendency more marked, despite the general illusion that things are much more "meritocratic" than they used to be. Of course, it has always been the case that a working-class youngster from a family with ambition and some idea of how to work the system, could have some hope of getting to Oxford or Cambridge, and indeed to the grammar schools (now fast disappearing) which fed them. And this fact is much harped-on by those on the political Right who want to see the grammar and independent schools given more help from the state. But the number has never been more than a tiny trickle: a token proportion which was useful for propaganda, but hardly significant in terms of the prevailing distribution of educational opportunity in the society as a whole.

Despite what I have just suggested—namely that much of the "egalitarianism" of Oxford and Cambridge is a sham—it is nevertheless true that at present there is real worry about the state of the "equal opportunity" dream initiated by the Labor party in its comprehensive school policy of recent years. This is not so much because of violence in the classroom or vandalism among the young: it is rather because of an increasing feeling that many youngsters are simply not being taught enough, not being challenged enough, by the present generation of teachers. This applies to all ranges of ability and social class. One not only hears of complaints by parents of very clever children that they are suffering for lack of stimulus in state schools. One hears it too from those whose children are just average. There is a considerable drift away from schools into the more "adult" world of further education colleges for the later stages of secondary education (the A-levels which are the passports to further study). In the past week or two I have heard expressions of deep concern about prospects for schooling in the public sector from two parents with unimpeachably socialist and even Marxist convictions. There may not be a crisis yet: but there is enough worry to be genuinely disturbing.

Finally, it is worth noting a small but growing movement for taking children out of school altogether. It has always been legally possible to do this: the law insists that every child shall be educated, but it says "at school or otherwise." The caveat of the last phrase has been taken up by people belonging to a group called "Education Otherwise," who recently advertised their work on TV, and got a huge mailbag as a result. Many of those who want their children out of school are people whose children are simply unhappy in the school environment. But there are doubtless some who take their children away, and make their own arrangements, (they are not just aristocrats who can afford governesses) because they think they can do the job better anyway. "Deschooling" will, I think, become commoner in the years ahead in Britain, even if it remains the solution adopted only by a tiny minority. "Education Otherwise" is an interesting straw in the contemporary wind—or should one say in the stream of educational hot air?

BRIAN WICKER

(*Brian Wicker is* Commonweal's *regular correspondent in Great Britain.*)

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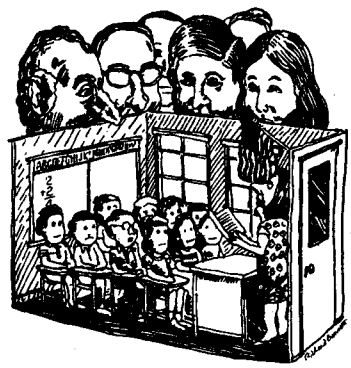
ANOTHER CHANCE FOR VOUCHERS?

MARY ELLEN LEARY



A new case for parental power over school purse-strings

No matter how firmly President Carter uses his veto to close the door on educational tax credits for parents whose children are in private schools—as he repeatedly has said he will—the high degree of concern Congress has expressed for parents coping with private educational costs suggests that the horse may be out of the barn, never again to be corralled. The votes in the House for Rep. Charles A. Vanick's plan and in the Senate for U.S. Senator Daniel P. Moynihan's may have been prompted more by the political necessity for providing tax relief to the middle class than by any educational philosophy. But the focus of these and other bills this year was significant: they identified government educational subsidy as financial support direct to the pupil and to the family, not to an institution. This concept, winning majority favor in both houses, provokes a fresh interest in "voucher" funding for education.

The voucher, like a food stamp or the G.I. educational grant, is usable anywhere in the appropriate marketplace. The idea had a brief popularity a decade ago and some partial testing, then faded from sight. But it has not died away. It has simmered along in numerous education publications and now is provoking a new burst of interest amidst a public disillusioned about the adequacy of many governmental institutions, public schools among them.

Abetting this interest is a marked fluidity just now within the traditional American school system. Some of the change has been mandated by the courts, some of it contrived to engage the minds of children from minority cultures, some of it the product of neighborhood and community awareness or of creative teachers. In the ferment over desegregation, decentralization, community linkage, bi-lingual emphasis, compensatory classes, programs for the disadvantaged, the handicapped and the very talented, school districts have developed a wide spectrum of special classes and special schools.

Two other factors threaten the traditional public school structure. One is the troubling fact that all these "special ed" efforts are not allaying the disparity in school funding and school program between inner cities and suburbs. In fact, as sociologist James Coleman has argued, court-imposed programs for school integration may be hurrying along the white flight to the suburbs and aggravating inner-city school poverty. The second factor is the emergence of many new private schools, often successfully designed for profit, which are luring a considerable number of children away from the public system. Side by side with these multiplying private schools, Catholic schools are enjoying a resurgence.

Into this reality of an American educational system in flux, an invitation is out for an even more revolutionary change. A slim, highly readable volume by two University of California law professors at Berkeley, John E. Coons and Stephen B. Sugarman, is the newest text seriously advancing the thesis that parents should be the decision-makers in allocating public educational funds by the simple choice they make of schools for their children. *Education by Choice—the Case for Family Control* (University of California Press, $10.95, 223 pp.) advocates abandonment of traditional reliance on neighborhood clustering as the logical basis for school assignment and an end to traditional uniformity in curriculum, pace and classroom style.

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29 September 1978: 616

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In response to the diversity of tastes, interests, culture and talents which characterize today's school population, the Coons-Sugarman proposal recommends complete freedom on the family's part to choose any school in reasonable distance (bus service may be the limiting factor) which meets minimal state standards. The cost of that schooling, whether in a public school, private school, specialist art school, dance school, military school, community school, ethnic school, religious school, socialist school, or any other kind of school, would be borne through taxes pro-rated among all youngsters as "scholarships." Coons and Sugarman predict that this empowerment of the consumer would encourage new schools to spring up, would provide students with a variety of programs to suit their special needs, and would consequently quicken their response. Any creative teacher who could keep the school day interesting and productive would be blessed with government funding; the school so drab and dull that children (and their parents) abhor it would wither for lack of funds.

The idea that public support for education should follow all pupils wherever they might choose to study, and not just within the confines of the neighborhood public schoolhouse, was publicized in the '60s by economist Milton Friedman and then strongly advocated by sociologist Christopher Jencks, at the Center for the Study of Public Policy at Harvard. The Office of Economic Opportunity, groping for solutions to inner-city problems, became intrigued with the "voucher" concept and in the early '70s sought school districts willing to experiment with vouchers generously endowed by OEO. The plan failed to catch on except in one district, Alum Rock, California, a poor, semi-rural largely Mexican-American community eastward of San Jose, where a four-year experience with a watered-down voucher plan is all the solid testing the idea has so far generated. Just what Alum Rock proves is still under debate, for the government-funded analysis by Rand Corporation has not yet been published. It is expected out this winter, as part of a broad study of "alternative education" throughout the U.S. including some unorthodox ventures in Eugene, Oregon, Minneapolis and Cincinnati.

Initial reports by Rand's analyst Eliot Levinson emphasize that Alum Rock's program never became a true voucher system, for the competition from private schools never materialized. There were none in the area and innovators couldn't muster financing to start one. In the public schools of Alum Rock, which did set up competition for students, consumer selection was never wholly free of direction at the district superintendent's level. However, a considerable variety of classroom approaches did spring up within the thirteen public schools in the Alum Rock experiment, many teachers did make use of new latitude in their curriculum and teaching styles, and this did prove popular with students. Communication with parents was greatly improved; and though the experiment has ended and the extra money gone, Alum Rock has retained open enrollment with busing to facilitate it, while enthusiasm lingers for individuality in teaching approaches. There is also confidence that parents, if adequately supplied with information, can and will make sound choices to suit individual children.

According to those who evaluated the Alum Rock experience as it progressed, "freedom of choice" for parents can't work as long as control over funds rests with the educational political centers. As one close observer of Alum Rock said, "No bureaucracy will willingly yield up its power over the purse. A true voucher test won't occur until it is mandated by political forces outside the school district."

Today, the educational climate in the U.S. shows greater interest in vouchers—than existed in 1970, says Dr. Daniel Weiler who heads the Rand Corporation study. He sees "an increasing tendency to embrace the notion that alternatives in educational opportunity represent a desirable development. 'Choice' is seen as a legitimate way to reach for this." There are, however, as he put it, "many camps in the alternative education movement." Some want "back-to-basics" education, some want community-based schools, some want ethnic-focused schools, some want religious schools. "There is a great variety inviting choice, but we have come up against the problem of limited resources, the abrupt new desire for economy in government expressed in the California vote. This seems to indicate a conflict brewing."

The Coons-Sugarman Proposal

What is unique about the Coons-Sugarman contribution to the voucher discussion is, first, the practicality with which they propose, step by step, how to bring such a system into being, and, second, their insistence that parental choice must not lead to elitism and not nullify the nation's drive toward racial integration.

Coons and Sugarman are recognized experts in educational finance, having pursued in various areas, especially Chicago, New York and California, the goal of equitably equalized funding for public schools, despite differing local district wealth. In this effort they have won significant legal victories. One of the most recent and far-reaching is the *Serrano* decision in California, in which the State Supreme Court supported their argument that the wealth of the entire state, not merely that in dissimilar districts, must stand behind the educational opportunity available to each child. These pursuits led them to their current position on vouchers.

"I was teaching law at Northwestern University," John Coons recalls, "and in the summer of 1962 the

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Chicago school system asked me to examine differences in funding available to various neighborhoods within the city. I found some. But they were piddling differences compared to the dramatic difference in total amount of money poured into schools in the suburbs in contrast to that available in any city district. I began to wonder about this. . . ."

That was the start. A Russell Sage Foundation grant for studies in law and sciences provided Coons the opportunity to interest a couple of bright law students in pursuing with him problems of fairness in public school finance. Together he, Sugarman and Wisconsin law professor William W. Clune —all good friends who go back-packing together in the summer—have produced three books, a score of articles, drafts of some model statutes and initiative measures to implement their ideas. Much of their work has been technical: the painstaking detail of model laws, bar journal studies, complex analyses of mathematical inequities lodged in the formulas by which tax money is allocated to school districts. "Very boring stuff!" Coons concedes. His readers, however, have often been judges who found the data convincing.

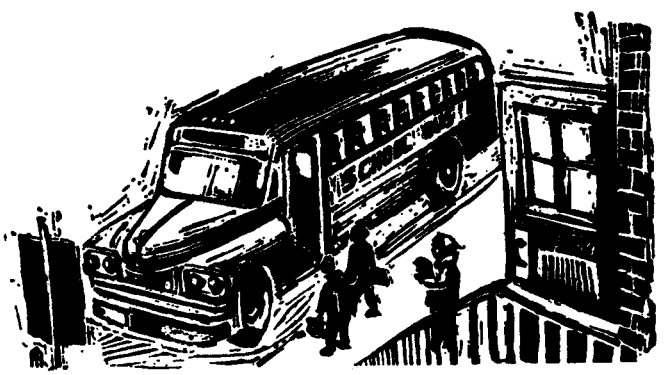
"We came to our ideas about parental power backwards," Sugarman points out. "We were heavily involved in those school tax studies. But step by step we came to the position that parents, not school districts, ought to be deciding how to spend money for education. Parents know, better than school professionals, what their own children need. Parents care more. We came to see that the present public school structure is too limiting for children."

Or, as Coons puts it: "We wanted to erase the distinctions of wealth when families choose what is best for their youngsters."

Their fiscal studies led Coons and Sugarman to examine the constraints and stereotypes in current public education which seem to repel many central city youngsters and yield a curriculum which does not fit the aspirations many parents have for their children. They observed that middle-class parents were escaping unsatisfactory city schools by moving out to suburbs where relatively new, amply funded and progressive schools could be responsive to their wishes. Wealthy parents escaped by sending their offspring to private schools. Those for whom there was no escape were poor families, minority families, immigrant families. For those children many special compensatory programs were being devised, but education was nevertheless increasingly difficult for them, frustrating, unsatisfactory and alien. The two law professors came to feel that parental dissatisfaction with the system is widespread especially among those who cannot leave it. They became persuaded that everyone using the school system needed the option to seek schooling freely, of whatever kind and at whatever place the family chose. The poor and the minority families would thus get the same freedom of choice the wealthy now enjoy.

Essentially the Coons-Sugarman proposal centers on these four key points:

- The basic responsibility for selecting and guiding a child's education lies with parents (not the state) and with the children as they mature. That choice should be aided by an independent professional advisory service, funded by public money and designed (a) to provide objective data about the available array of participating schools and (b) to consult with families about the most appropriate choice for each child's talents and for parents' goals for the child's life.
- All schools should be able to participate if they choose, and to receive a child's "scholarship" money in payment for educational services, so long as minimal state requirements about teaching are followed and the school functions within the law, keeps books open for state inspection, and agrees to accept all applicants within its capacity. If one school is inundated with applicants, the assumption is that new schools patterned after it will appear.
- Open eligibility for all comers is pivotal in order to prevent segregationist schools, though such free access might conflict with some religious communities'



desire to serve members of their own faiths exclusively. Schools unwilling to accept this proviso would remain outside, as private schools apart from the public funding scheme. Many schools with unique character, such as a Buddhist school, a strict military school, or a school stressing native Indian or African culture, might naturally attract a limited cluster of especially attuned clients, but they could not bar any deviant applicant who comes to the door, nor discriminate against him once inside—and still receive public funds.

- Participating schools must operate within the state's financial allotment, without receiving outside funds. The expectation is that public money would include "enrichment" funds and "compensatory" programs to meet special needs; it is not assumed that all children at all schools will get identical scholarships. But *Education by Choice* flatly rejects the Friedman proposal that the rich might enhance participating private schools by adding on benefits. Private endowments from rich

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families to improve schools their children attend would frustrate the aim of opening to the poor the same options available to others. Coons and Sugarman do propose, however, that all families, graded according to income, pay some reasonable "user fee" towards the education cost, however modest that fee might be for the poor. They also contemplate the possibility of schools operating at about four different levels of expensiveness under public funding, from very simple to very sophisticated. The poor would have access to the costliest for very little expenditure, the state equalizing their contribution against much higher personal contributions by the richer families.

Beyond these points the authors confront many of the specific problems that may arise in school policy, teacher relations, state regulation and family informational adequacy. But they often fall back on the suggestion: "Experiment with it; work it out. You will resolve problems by working at them."

Barely a few months off the press, *Education by Choice* has fallen onto remarkably hospitable soil in the tax-wary, anti-establishment mood prevailing in California. In addition, the Serrano ruling, in combination with the Jarvis-Gann vote, has transferred total funding of education in California to the state level, leaving local school districts somewhat redundant, a sufficient disruption to encourage experimentation.

Another development is that the Los Angeles school district, one of the nation's largest, will start busing this fall under a court order for integration purposes. For many children the Los Angeles sprawl necessitates extremely long morning and afternoon rides. Reaction against such a busing burden has prompted more than usual interest in private school alternatives, church schools being the most available. San Francisco also starts full implementation of its school integration plan this fall in a pattern disturbing to many families.

However, the most dramatic episode to fuel interest in private school options—and concern about how to fund them—was the very first reaction in California to the June tax-slash vote. School districts all over the state promptly closed summer schools. What occurred then was a mushrooming of private summer schools. Teachers who had planned on serving in summer classes banded together to set up *ad hoc* schools, sometimes even renting their regular classrooms and charging fees that covered janitors, maintenance and their salaries. Many parents faced with summer-idled youngsters or those needing "make-up" classes gladly paid the fees though obviously the poor did not. No one knows how many of these first-time private schools will continue this fall but some of the phenomenon is expected to survive as new year-round private schools. How numerous they are was attested by the State Department of Education consultant on private education, Robert McCarthy, who said his office was overwhelmed with inquiries and requests for certification forms. It turns out to be easier to start a private school in California than to get a driver's license: just file an affidavit with the school's name and address, names of officers and address where records are kept. No fee. No minimum requirement for teachers other than they be "capable of teaching." While about 10 percent of the state's 4 million school children were in private schools last year (over 80 percent of them in Catholic schools) California anticipates a notable jump in that figure this fall.

"We came to our ideas backwards. We were heavily involved in school tax studies. But step by step we came to the position that parents, not school districts, ought to be deciding how to spend money for education . . . . The present public school structure is too limiting for children."

In this unsettled post-13 atmosphere in California, in which all governmental institutions are under challenge, the Coons-Sugarman proposal was taken up with enthusiasm by an eclectic group, ranging from very conservative businessmen to liberal teachers and leftist activists, and including some incumbent political figures. The group quickly attracted interest in minority communities, revealing the extent of discontent with the present system. Its president is a black San Francisco dentist, Dr. Henry Lucas.

This nucleus group of some thirty people formed two weeks after the election have met several times subsequently. Interest seems to be growing among them toward preparing an initiative for the 1980 California ballot. How closely it will be modeled on the Coons-Sugarman formula is still uncertain, but the views of these two U.C. law professors have been the focal point for discussion and certainly triggered the initial post-election coming together.

An additional catalyst, has been the conservative San Francisco-based Institute for Contemporary Studies, which has published studies and reports dealing with the voucher idea (including a recent paper-bound compilation, *Parents, Teachers & Children* with essays from Coons and Sugarman, James Coleman, Nathan Glazer, Andrew M. Greeley and Michael Novak, among others). The group has adopted a name, CHOICE, standing for "Californians Helping to Organize for Individual Control of Education." It is trying to reach consensus on several controversial points. One of the gravest is the place of religious schools in a "choice" system.

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Coons is Catholic, Sugarman Jewish. Each is deeply convinced that the values of their respective faiths should be incorporated into schools available for parents who favor education permeated with religious content, and available at public cost. They realize others have quite different values which they, too, want imparted to their children. The nation, they think, hungers for the chance to provide direction and a sense of purpose to children as an integral part of their education, reinforcing family values.

For all their sharp and varied criticisms of public schools, at one point referred to as "professional garrisons," their central charge against the present-day public system is that it inculcates "neutral" values and turns out conformists. The public school product may learn independence in economic and technological terms but not in terms of personal autonomy, they say. In politics, life style, social behavior and religion, the public school retards rather than encourages individuality, they hold, largely for the sake of a "safe" society and the transmission of "elitist" modes of behavior. What the authors of *Education by Choice* prefer is an education aimed at developing autonomy in a child—"the full development of the child's latent capacities for independent reflection and for judgment on issues of personal morality and social justice."

Every child, of course "should have command of an adequate verbal and mathematical language. He also needs to know something of history, philosophy, culture and science. Such elements are not grossly different from the minimum about which there is societal consensus now. . . . But autonomy requires more than minimums. We believe it demands the child's exposure to and dialogue with issues of justice and personal morality. His education should draw him into that human exchange about the nature of the good life which in large measure is the central exchange of the permanent debate among democratic people . . . Those promoting autonomy should seek an arrangement that will foster the child's personal engagement with good and evil and with the issue of his own role in the pursuit of a just order. . . ."

This, in their opinion, is what all parents seek for their children, whatever the cultural orientation, economic level, or degree of sophistication. But in focusing upon parents as the most responsible deciders about education, they were guided as well by a sense that society has become engulfed in big, distant, impersonal organizations and needs to snatch back some power nearer to the individual. They are not hostile to the professional in education. But they think the public school system caters too much to the structure and not enough to the child: professionals should be keyed in to parents, not to district boards, county superintendents, legislators or the state educational hierarchy.

In developing their theories about the place of parents in the educational system, they have used the term "subsidiarity" to suggest that "responsibility for dependent individuals should belong to the smaller and more intimate rather than the larger and more anonymous communities."

"It's a fairly fuzzy word," Coons concedes. "I don't even find consistency about its meaning among Catholic philosophers, and when I've used it before Catholic audiences I've been misunderstood. It's a word I first remember from my high school religion classes and as I've read further about it, it made sense to me. We use it to draw attention to the idea that individualism and collectivism are inseparable and collectivism is the chosen link among free human beings. When it is free and voluntary it works. But there is a tension between these two. As I understand the church's use of the term, it represents a kind of decentralized social order. We use it to emphasize the voluntary aspect of association in reordering education."

The Place of Catholic Schools

For all this personal dedication to a value system linked, by his own preference, to the Catholic faith, Coons has been dubious about how supportive Catholic institutions might be of his voucher plan. He wonders whether diocesan or religious-order schools would accept, along with per-capita state funds, requirements for open financial accounting, for compulsory admission of all applicants (the authors assume special provision must be made by the state for recalcitrant or unteachable pupils), and especially for a new and decisive level of parental intervention. But he has never been dubious about Catholic parent response. From those he knows he has met enthusiasm beyond expectation. He is convinced that "choice" would open up opportunities for far more extensive Catholic education than is presently available. Some Catholic schools might elect to remain outside the program, but they might find it difficult to attract parents willing to pay tuition when other Catholic schools were available with state support.

That other areas of institutional sensitivity might impede Catholic enthusiasm for the idea of state funding for Catholic schools was clear from some of the CHOICE sessions. Joseph McElligott, Catholic educational representative at the California legislature, argued that the explicit teaching of religion ought to be church-supported and not state-supported, and that church schools, to make that distinction clear, might accept some reduced level of public funding. He indicated considerable reluctance to intertwine the two kinds of education, secular and religious, and felt public money might be accepted for the former but not for the latter. Coons was not persuaded. Religious values, he argued, are transmitted all through a school's environment, not just

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in classes labeled "religion." "Sheer cosmetics," he scoffed at the fine-line distinctions: nobody would be fooled. "Why not just be up front about the idea that a variety of values is acceptable and appropriately inculcated in schooling and that religion is one of them? Then let the state trust the parents to choose what they want."

On the other hand, as the church's official political representative in educational matters in California, McElligott has been generally supportive of the voucher principle, including an earlier initiative try by a Southern California group to get a voucher plan onto the ballot. (Started before Jarvis-Gann, it didn't get enough signatures to qualify.) But CHOICE sessions also disclosed other serious doubts about the inclusion of church schools. A number of persons presently in public office voiced personal opposition to sharing public money with religious schools or called the idea politically unattainable. California's Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. Wilson Riles, has denounced vouchers as "a dangerous concept." Not too many decades ago public education in California, as in many other states, was the setting for virulent anti-Catholic sentiment. This has dissipated, but the politically experienced fear its revival, a danger the two authors may have dismissed too lightly.

Whether the Coons-Sugarman concept will survive the difficult drafting debate is not clear. It is already being modified: for instance, the CHOICE initiative would admit to state support only non-profit schools, whereas Coons anticipates a lively interest among profit-making schools and assumes they might well be acceptable. The initiative does project a gradual phasing in of the plan over several years and "a sunset clause" specifying when the whole thing might be dumped if not popular. But the general goal of resting financial control and responsibility for school selection with parents rather than a politically structured school administration has caught the favor of many.

Out of long experience in the courts dealing with educational issues and study of the church-state separation issue, the two authors write: "A general scholarship plan intended to assist the purposes of families and individuals (children) and not the interests of institutions—sectarian or other—might well survive constitutional challenges, even if families were permitted to choose religious schools." Conceding that no one can be sure, they advocate experiments leading to court tests. Their confidence is not to be underestimated. Few lawyers have enjoyed more success in the courts on educational issues and their thesis that parents, not school districts, should hold the purse strings is likely some day to confront the courts.

The range of schools they are willing to see created may, to some, seem threatening. Some might be heavily academic, college-oriented "headmaster"-run schools; some community schools managed by parents in the neighborhood and even housed in a private home; some focused on environmental issues or ethnic identity; some "guru"-taught; some with teachers as the power centers and managers, professionals so esteemed that parents would seek them out. Some schools, they expect, would be completely run by parent councils, some by decisions shared between parents and teachers. Their assumption is the teaching profession would come into new respectability as the administrators in education were removed or lessened in power, the educational focus centered on the school itself and on what parents perceive as progress in their children's learning. They assume schools directly responsive to consumer demand will be less costly and may pay teachers more, administrators less. Schools which fell out of favor in the marketplace would lose children, of course, and might be driven to close. They anticipate the possibility of mid-term shifts from one school to another, for whatever reason, with the pro-rata share of the year's school money following the child. Eliminating the district administrative structure would shift supervisory responsibility—and a lot of work—to a central state agency, but *Education by Choice* assumes rules would be far simpler than they are today and standards clear and minimal, since the marketplace demand would be the deciding force between acceptable and unacceptable schools. Do they sincerely believe consumer expectations—even subject to whim and fad—would improve the system? Yes. Parents would know which child needed the best math teacher around, which wanted more emphasis on reading, which is going to work with his hands in life, and which with his big mouth and which with his head. They want the best for each child. They would find it.

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This all seems to place extraordinary demands on parents, already overburdened in this harried, both-parents-working era. But an absolutely essential element in this structure would be the professional analyt-

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ical apparatus created to advise and guide parents.

In the Alum Rock experiment it was found that data about school styles, curriculum emphasis and teaching environment could be communicated to parents through pamphlets or catalogue-type data, supplemented by personal advice if the parent wished. That trial run found such material very useful to parents, and the communication got better with experience. There, where many parents did not speak English and some did not even read, one device was a comic-book style of drawing where cartoons illustrated which schools specialized in math, in science, in music, in carpentry, etc. The material was printed in Spanish as well as English. Alum Rock still retains from its experiment far more advice to parents about individual school differences than is usually available elsewhere.

The material Coons and Sugarman contemplate would be on a more sophisticated scale. It would list and evaluate reasonably available schools for families, identify their curricula and teacher qualifications, their classroom style and the performance results of past children. Disliking tests, the authors nevertheless figure some measurements must be available to advise parents about progress earlier children have made or satisfaction earlier parents have registered. They are aware many minority families resent "counseling" as currently practiced in schools, for it too often counsels the minorities into lower-level aspirations. Rather, they wish it in a "choice" system to be primarily a counseling tool for parents, sensitive to their goals and values. Such oversight might seem intrusive to many private schools and deter their joining the plan and one can anticipate challenges arising to the advisory interpretations or to ratings of curriculum and student progress. But, admonishing always, "Experiment. Try it!" the two professors think such a system can be practically achieved.

Integration and Diversity

In their willingness to confront the practical along with theory, Coons and Sugarman range over a great many problem areas: health regulation, building standards, loans for start-up schools, labor relations, pensions and tenure. They may have forestalled some anticipated opposition from teachers by insisting that all present tenure contracts be honored. New teachers, however, would hardly be guaranteed jobs in a market-dominated system. Pension rights are assumed to be necessary and the authors think collective bargaining could be adapted to their scheme. They have one main peg for their retorts to the usual objections about vouchers: insistence that state and federal laws must be obeyed, books must be open to inspection, basic data about school functions must be a matter of public record.

This is an important element in their confidence that the system would not lead to racial segregation. Some voluntary "clustering" of minorities, perhaps; but no forced segregation so long as open admission in all participating schools is rigidly enforced. An open-door policy would mean that even a school designed by Chinese, teaching Mandarin and focused on Oriental culture must, under the "choice" plan, be open to anyone who comes to the threshhold. If an Indian-ethnic school had an atmosphere hostile to whites, Coons and Sugarman anticipate the evaluating reports would make this known. Some supervisory structure would have to confront the problem. "White flight" schools under private auspices might start up in the suburbs, but if their academic standards were high and led to college-readiness, the minorities would be trekking right out, on publicly provided buses.

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Coons's own family decisions best illustrate his personal commitment to racial integration in American schools. When he and his wife first came to Berkeley, that community had just embarked on the first voluntary city-wide busing program to meld black and white youngsters. The five Coons children were sent to these integrating schools, both parents becoming active in PTA work and school projects. Recently, though, they have transferred their children to local parochial schools. These are just as racially mixed (Catholic schools in California overall count roughly 40 percent of their students as minorities compared to a 29 percent level in California public schools statewide), but the Coons felt the Catholic schools were doing a better job at establishing congenial relations between children of the different races. Sugarman, father of a 15-month daughter, has not yet confronted parental responsibilities about schooling.

Like Coons and Sugarman, Andrew Greeley does not think "choice" would exacerbate racial discrimination. Writing for the Institute of Contemporary Studies, Greeley suggested that all vouchers would do is create a totally new—and better—situation in urban schools. Parents, he said, would no longer be "completely at the mercy of the impersonal dynamics of urban change." And he notes: "Almost any change would be an im-

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provement." Coons considers "choice" the only device that can create a bridge between suburbs and inner cities.

It is not clear how many Americans share their disillusionment about the public school structure. A vote in California would put this to the test. But while the book argues for experimentation, it pays no respects to the degree of experimentation now underway within the system. In California, for instance, Dr. Wilson Riles, state superintendent of instruction, has greatly expanded the concept of "compensatory" schools to a system-wide involvement of parents and far more individual attention to each child. Generously funded, the state has added team-teachers and classroom aides so that through four years' effort 62 percent of its elementary school students now have far more personal assistance in schools and some 280,000 parents are involved as classroom volunteers or on committees directly responsible for individual school policy, with latitude to set local standards. Yes, remarkable participation, Sugarman concedes. Parents have been given a voice. But not power. However, the public school structure may not be as vulnerable as Coons and Sugarman assume.

Beyond issues of organizational structure, or the plethora of knotty problems which Coons and Sugarman insist, lawyer-like, are subject to solution by reasonable people, or even the use of public money in private (and religious) schools, what may prove most sensitive is their concept that all views and all values may be taught in any of these publicly-funded schools. They insist socialism, Communism and, if someone chooses, even Nazism can be taught within a publicly-funded school, as long as laws of the country are obeyed, the school is open to public examination, parents opt for it freely and anyone may be admitted. But they are satisfied that truly extremist schools would be rare and represent no danger. Freedom itself is the safety valve, they say, as the Constitution means it to be.

They go further: "We believe that cultural and ideological diversity is a potential strength of our society and consider it perverse to apologize for its encouragement by government: we predict that such a policy would be a healing experience for the nation."

Further, in this vein, they write: "In actively encouraging families to express their cultural and ideological diversity, the nation would substitute mutual respect as the ground of a social accord that has been based too long on the acceptance by minorities of an elite model. The bestowal of choice implies trust and trust can beget trust, even among those of strongly different persuasions. . . . The message that society respects the values and tastes of the non-rich in the formal training of their children could be a stride toward a more stable civil order."

JESSE JACKSON'S GAME PLAN

JOHN DRUSKA

Will Jackson's concern be defeated by his methods?

When I attended a parochial school in Chicago we used to spend weeks practicing for perennial school-wide variety shows. I remember one, during fifth or sixth grade, for which our class had been designated to produce a skit meant to dramatize the important tenets of our *Christian Courtesy* book. My role required that I walk crosstage wearing my White Sox cap and, when I passed two girls costumed as nuns, be sure to tip my cap and greet them loudly enough for the audience to notice. We got our parts down to hypnotic reflexes; by curtain time we were as primed as zombies answering a Hollywood cast call for another '50s horror movie. Under the glare of the footlights, though, and the sense of the packed house, I reverted to instinct. I forgot to tip my cap to the nungirls, mumbled my greeting, and probably passed them with my hands in my pockets.

Surveying the press and other public reactions to Jesse Jackson's nationwide stumping for his PUSH to Excel program (begun at Chicago Vocational School early in the '70s, piloted in ten other Chicago schools soon afterward, and since targeted for thirty other cities) has forced me to recall this thespian failure. I've been struck by the emphasis in these reactions on manners, for example on Jackson's insistence that the high school students remove their hats while he's speaking.

In a recent *National Review* paean to Jackson ("Hats Off to Jesse Jackson," June 25, 1976) Barbara Nauer, who describes herself as having spent a decade in "black education," bewails the treatment she has been receiving from her recent students and dotes on her earlier ones: "Do you remember how generally trusting and

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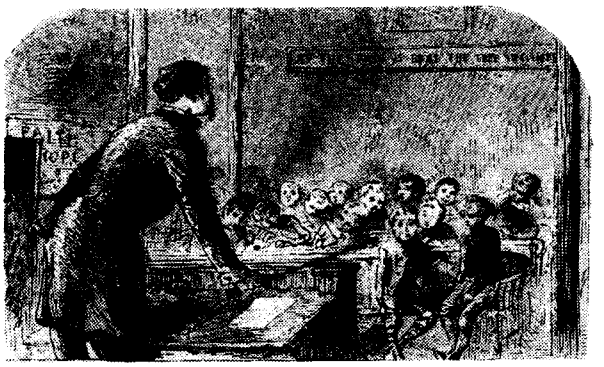
amiable, how *teachable*, the black kids were who first flocked into our college programs in the Sixties? The black youngsters in those first waves came respectfully. *They came with their hats off.*" (Italics hers.) Amidst sniping at subversives who have taken advantage of our democratic machinery for their own ends, other Americans whom two hundred years of democratic freedom may have left unprepared to deal with the ruthlessness of the aforementioned, and high- (but fuzzy-) minded liberal academics, she congratulates Jackson on his commitment to righteous values:

> For such a man has dared to assert that he is or has something special and that he feels neither ashamed nor guilty about it. His action announces that he stands for things that are greater than individuals—awesome, important things. For me there is something in such a man that is akin to that which informed the priests and nuns I knew as a child. He acknowledges that the sacred exists and that it is as real and alive as the dross. To acknowledge this is to have the *good power*. [Italics hers.]

Newsweek, *Today's Education* and other mass-appeal and professional journals also feature Jackson's approach to dress-and-appearance issues, while testifying to his power to influence high school students. *Today's Education*'s interview with Jackson quotes him as warning that "The outlandish costumes some students wear . . . are counter to their best interests," in meeting prospective employers, for example. *Newsweek* cites Jackson's opposition to "distracting costumes and the



use of street language in the classroom." Both magazines echo the *National Observer* quote that PUSH to Excel uses in one of its publicity leaflets: "To the surprise of many, the chagrin of some, and the utter delight of Jackson, the response to his impassioned, austere and—his critics say—reactionary message has been almost uniformly the same: wild enthusiasm."

Hearing Jesse Jackson speak leaves little doubt that he possesses an uncanny ability to create enthusiasm. His keynote address to the National Catholic Educational Association convention at St. Louis last spring was one demonstration of how, often by way of the rhetorical parallelism common to fundamentalist preaching, he can build himself and his audience up to a fever pitch. At St. Louis Jackson called for discipline, but as therapy rather than punishment. He called for teaching by motivating students through personal attention to them. Both points were more welcome basics than the media-mixed pablum of "basics" that we've had to regurgitate the last couple of years, and with which I'd initially identified Jackson's view on schooling. In its uncut format, as in the St. Louis speech, his message comes through not just forcefully, but much more sensibly than it sounds in any TV news snippets or radio excerpts of his performances.

But it's those instantaneous mass-gut responses that Jackson gets—students taking up his chants or taking off their hats—as much as any sensible sentence within his inspirational delivery, that we've seen our media harp on. Such national coverage also obscures, in part, what's beneficial in Jackson's message, his real concerns for students and for our society. It encourages the fads and pseudo-philosophies of any number of educators with gripes or axes to grind to feed on those superficial signs of Jackson's influence. It aids and abets all those who'd like to conceive of education, and of life, as us verses them, those apostles of two sides and two sides only.

When somebody like Nauer centers her praise of Jackson on his "good power," which she perceives in opposition to all the permissive teachers for whom "Drill, memorization, and systematic absorption of information are abominations," it amuses me. Her words "good power" seem to class Jackson with the heroes of *Star Wars*, that simplistic popular celebration of good force vs. bad force which is so reassuring in our complex world.

And so Jackson, taken up as a hero by some of the right, has been vilified by some of the left as a reactionary.

If we could penetrate the obscurantist right-left tissue of labels and interpretations that press coverage imposes on our public actions, it would seem we could better evaluate, as one of many possible ways to educate people, Jackson's PUSH to Excel program.

Because of some of Jackson's own language, though, and the methodology he advocates through it, I think PUSH itself helps to obscure its human concerns (PUSH stands for People United to Save Humanity) and contributes to oversimplifying public response to education.

Certainly Jackson's fingering of "decadent" media as arch-villains in the PUSH economy is arguably sane. The "decadent TV shows and motion pictures" he mentions, and the disc jockeys who purvey corrupt values through chatter and music that Jackson calls "a mishmash of decadence" are targets that daily prove to us they could use some critical scrutiny. He locates his criticism of decadence especially within the black community, where he challenges a "welfare mentality" that

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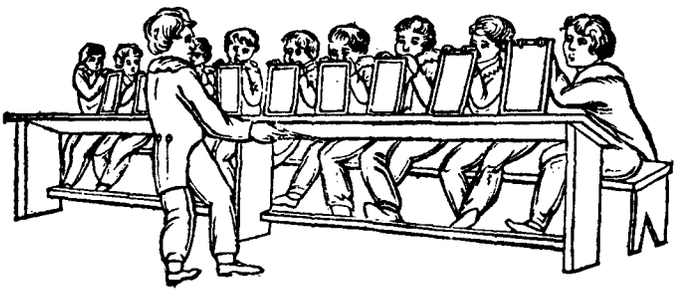
prevents blacks from assuming enough responsibility for their own lives, political apathy, and Tom-calling ("the ideal ought to be for all of us to suceed"). This talk has been challenged by some well-placed blacks, but what interests me in Jackson's social criticism, what I find problematic, is his promulgation of the criticism to black students through the mass medium of himself.

When *Ebony* writer Alex Poinsett asked Jackson



about educational theory, Jackson replied: "I don't presume to be an educational theorist. I got some educational theories. I have a liberal education, went to grad school, did a lot of reading and a whole lot of observation. But I ain't no professional educator. I'm a mass educator."

And, to boot, a mass-educator using athletics as a prime model for education. In the same *Ebony* article Jackson foresees using the media to "give students awards for artistic, cultural and academic excellence just as they have created all-city and all-state athletic teams," and in the *Newsweek* report Jackson describes school principals as coaches: "I still like the responsibility that the coach assumes . . . if you play on his or her team, all wear the same uniform and have the same goal . . . somebody has to be the supreme interpreter." He advocates a 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. moratorium on media-consumption, a homework period similar to daily sports practice. A recent PUSH financial plea even describes Jackson as "a tall, athletic, young, black minister."

Jackson's choice of sports as an educational model and his idea of generating a mass appeal to young blacks to shape up in school are, for me, cruxes of the PUSH to Excel program. It may be that he has calculated the moment and his audience correctly and chosen the means necessary to concentrate that audience upon behavioral problems important to their success as human beings. Perhaps Jackson, the S.C.L.C. and Operation Breadbasket veteran who used to be pictured wearing blue jeans in the vanguard for black power, has assessed correctly that the issues of the late '70s are of an entirely different order from those of the late '60s. Surely his experiences in the civil rights movement have shown him the efficacy of certain kinds of mass action. My own experiences teaching and working with young blacks in the late '60s, in Washington, D.C., Cleveland and Chicago, and talking with blacks who teach currently in the public school systems of Chicago and Indianapolis, suggest to me that the problems in black and/or any education today are so intricately varied, so ingrained and involved with the labyrinthine underpinnings of our commercial society, that though Jackson's highly emotional campaign might be effective at impact and does contain a crucial *interest* in the lives of students that all of us might do well to share, it could be more cosmetic than substantial, could even, ironically, be co-opted by some its own language and its marketing techniques into established social structures harmful to the psychic health of students and other people.

Although he fiercely attacks the *content* of media and of other decadent sectors in our society, is Jackson, through his choices of sports and a morality-based mass-appeal to youth, relying on some of the same techniques the media use, perhaps decadent in themselves, and pushing some of the same methodology (athletic-like competition in studies for example) that might be responsible in other contexts for a good deal of our decadence?

After teaching for part or all of a dozen years it's my belief that few things are becoming as destructive to learning in our schools, let alone to life in our nation (remember Nixon's game plans?) as sports and the vocabulary of sports that has permeated our everyday lives. Though in a less-commercialized atmosphere we once might have been able to indulge in games almost as if in contests of ritual and mythical import, and though some of my teacher-friends still find the coach-authority role valuable in dealing with their students, we now too often see sports, in concert with the media-industry, coming to form a kind of single mass-religion, a colossal commercial jockstrap that shapes, manipulates, sanctions our lives, promotes the itches of competition and consumption, limits our vision of ourselves. Coaches and commentators and quiz show hosts hand down the tablets of our deca(dent)logue.

While traditionally we have let sports serve us as a way of reaching intractable youngsters, and as a source of hero-models for privileged and under-privileged alike, today we need to look more critically at the way sports, like our sexual relationships, are being purveyed and perverted by our so-called communications experts, at the *ways* in which people are performing and the *ways* they are being portrayed as performing to masses of other people. In addition, Jackson's athletic bias risks perpetuating the fallacy that the brain works like a muscle.

His athletic model might work for those who use it as a system for collecting facts, assembling a version of knowledge. What happens if Jackson's listeners all

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get their asses in gear, only to find later that the machine is out of whack? Perhaps while Jackson is pushing his students, others will be renovating the rest of our society. But meanwhile I'm worried about how his emphasis on sports methodology, sold with a mass market in mind, appears to be aiming the students Jackson reaches toward the status quo our TV sitcoms have been able to stew in the last decade.

Recently, just after hearing a public radio report on one of Jesse Jackson's addresses to a student assembly in Washington, D.C., I listened to an interview of Ivan Illich, which Illich subverted by assuming the interviewer's role. Asking questions of himself, of the interviewer, of the audience in general, Illich, answering some of them, assailed the nature and the quality of our public language, its predictability, the sterile sets of packaged language that people routinely exchange, the severely limited expectations inherent to such exchanges. Illich claimed that, in contrast to his less-programmed childhood, subsequent especially to the growth of TV and the pervasive impact of modern media, children today consume programmed language, rather than participating in the development of their own authentic languages through conversation and other human situations, at about a 9-1 rate. Because of the predominance of such programmed language in our culture we allow ourselves to be seduced regularly into harangues or pre-plotted dialogues, and we're losing the capacity to use language in order to discover ourselves, to explore our relationships with one another, to educate.

Language thus becomes reflex without reflection. On a grand Hollywood scale we get the morality of a *Star Wars*. On slightly lesser scales the morality of a lot of the Jesus movement, or of Human Rights declarations, or perhaps of PUSH to Excel. Is Jackson doing more than marketing a language package of his own, like a TV exec concocting a program with special appeal for young black audiences? I'm not sure any of it will make us any better than the old *Christian Courtesy* book we used in that part of Chicago where we emulated baseball heroes on a gravel field, and which some power greater than ourselves later christened the "inner-city."

EDUCATION IN THE CABINET

GEORGE ELFORD

The proposed Department of Education runs into snags

Until recently, legislation establishing a new Department of Education was moving smoothly through both houses of Congress. As originally designed, the parallel bills would assemble, under a cabinet-level Secretary of Education, a host of offices and programs chiefly from HEW but also from the Departments of Agriculture and Labor—all dealing with education. The present Office of Education (OE) and National Institute of Education (NIE) would be the chief components of the new Department.

The obstacles that have now arisen in what once seemed an easy legislative passage to the President's desk only emphasize the complicated politicking, including that of the United States Catholic Conference, that has surrounded the proposed reorganization. No difficulties can be anticipated from the White House, but perhaps no real effort on behalf of the measure, either. By introducing the legislation the President fulfilled a promise made in his campaign visit to the National Education Association (NEA) headquarters, a promise he can, however, claim to have kept even if the legislation is derailed in Congress.

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The NEA has strenuously campaigned in recent months for the establishment of the Department of Education as a vehicle for an increased federal role in education. The NEA is currently calling for one-third of the cost of elementary and secondary education to be assumed by the federal government, in part, to offset "Jarvis-Gann-like" assaults on the property tax.

There is a certain irony here! A 1945 commission of the American Council on Education (ACE) and the National Education Association (NEA) commented on the expanding role of the federal government in education.

> It is the mature conclusion of the commission that a continuance of recent and current trends in federal-state relations in education will, within a measurable period of time, transfer predominant responsibility for the control of education in the United States from the states and localities to the national government. If education becomes federalized in the United States it will not be because the people want this to happen. . . . Rather, national control of schools will come by a process of accretion and infiltration. It will come, not because the people approve a policy of gradually shifting predominant educational control from the

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states and localities to the nation. Rather, it will result from responses to many small emergencies and from pressure of many special interests.

The NEA itself is now one of the chief interest groups calling for an increased federal role. The National School Boards Association, the National PTA, the American Association of School Administrators, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and the National Association of State Boards of Education (the "big six") organized the "Citizen's Committee for a Cabinet Department of Education." The co-chairman of this committee was the executive director of the Coalition of American Public Employees. The new department and an expanded federal role are now clearly in the interest of the NEA and those whom Daniel P. Moynihan has somewhat critically termed "the men of the public sphere."

The rival organization to the NEA, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), has actively opposed the establishment of the new department. While the NEA argued in favor of the new department because it would provide efficiency in the use of federal funds and increased visibility, prestige and attention for education, the AFT contended that education will be more effectively represented in the kinds of political coalitions that HEW tends to generate than in an isolated cabinet post. The *NEA Reporter,* in reply, contended that the AFT was against the Department because the NEA was for it. The *Reporter* quoted, with approval, Eliot Morrison's comments in the *New Republic,* saying

> It would be particularly irritating to let an independent union like NEA—which surely would dominate the new Department—get its hands on pieces of the Labor machinery.

The headline in the *Reporter* read—"NEA Gets Plum, AFT Munches Sour Grapes."

At this point in the debate, the USCC joined in the fray. Msgr. Wilfrid H. Paradis, secretary for education for the U.S. Catholic Conference (USCC), went on record as opposing the establishment of the new Department of Education in a letter to Senator Abraham Ribicoff. The contents of this letter were reprinted at length by the Religious News Service (3/20/78). This USCC position seemed curious to some, who wondered whether the Catholic opposition, albeit token opposition in this case, might well be legitimate or if it might be an instance of Catholic paranoia. The position taken by the USCC merits some discussion.

As reported by the RNS, Msgr. Paradis gave basically three reasons for the opposition of Catholic school interests to the new department.

One reason for opposing the cabinet post was expressed as "a genuine and well-founded fear that the services provided by the Office of Education will gradually erode into excessive and unwarranted intrusion and control by a Department of Education." In support of this concern, it must be acknowledged that federal aid without federal control is now and has ever been a myth. The American Council on Education has estimated that added costs imposed on colleges and universities alone, as a result of federal controls, run between $2 and $4 billion a year.

Federal influence generally aims not at attaining academic excellence but at social engineering and the accomplishment of political goals. The federal government, however, has in recent years, especially through the Office of Education, attempted to contribute to the advancement of education by heavily funding a series of educational ideas that have captured the attention of federal officials. This series of ideas has included PPBS (program planning and budgeting systems), accountability and performance-based contracting, competency-based teacher education, career education, bilingual education and multi-cultural education. Indeed, none of these ideas is without genuine merit. The pattern, however, has been the substantial financial investment in the advancement of ideas, when the ideas themselves need far more examination and clarification before any such massive support and dissemination would be warranted. With the establishment of a highly visible Secretary of Education and the attendant expectation that the federal government will come up with new answers, this kind of federal intrusion promises to continue at a quickened pace.

If the establishment of a Department of Education does indeed lead to increased federal funding, federal government intrusion and control will undoubtedly expand. Whether these reach the point of being "excessive and unwanted" depends on one's definition of these terms. For Catholic and other private schools, the only way to block any increase in federal intrusion and control is to avoid taking federal monies or even being interested in these monies. While some private schools are virtually committed to such a policy, Catholic school leaders have not considered this seriously.

A second reason for Catholic school opposition to the new department advanced by Msgr. Paradis dealt

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with the inclusion in the new Department of Education of certain Department of Agriculture and Department of Labor programs. In the USCC's judgment, non-public school participation in the programs conducted by these Departments has been "far more" equitable than participation in the programs conducted by the Office of Education, which will furnish the leadership for the new department. The judgment is not without some basis. In a 1968 report, Erickson and Greeley pointed out that:

> In keeping with a well-established pattern, federal aid flows rather easily through private pipelines when (as under OEO) the beneficiaries fall into "preschool," "dropout," or "postsecondary" categories or if the services are viewed as "welfare" rather than "education"; but severe restrictions appear when (as under ESEA) the elementary and secondary levels of schooling are involved. Public schoolmen either are more sensitive than other citizens to church-state issues or have special reasons (such as fear and dislike of nonpublic education) for opposing the assistance.

It is worth recalling that the federally funded effort to test the educational voucher was undertaken by the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) and not by OE. The commitment to public education in the Office of Education was such that OE never really considered the voucher plan experiment. Despite the worthy efforts of several OE officials, research continues to show that private school students receive less than their share from federal programs administered by OE.

On the question of folding programs from other federal departments into the proposed Department of Education, the USCC is apparently aligned with some stronger forces—those within Agriculture and Labor whose programs are at issue. All signs indicate these departments will succeed in keeping their educational efforts independent of the new department, and their success may amount to an unraveling of the whole concept.

The chief reason for the USCC's opposition to the new Department sheds some light on the pattern described above. Msgr. Paradis spoke of "the concern that a new department may well be controlled by persons almost exclusively committed to public school education and with little understanding for and appreciation of the value and the rights of non-public education." The pattern of speech-making on the one hand and actual performance on the other suggests that there are two definitions of American education among federal and state administrators in education, especially at the elementary and secondary levels. There is a rhetorical definition and an operational definition. The rhetorical definition of American education includes all schools, public and private, that serve the American public. This definition allows, for example, the Education Commissioner, Ernest L. Boyer, to affirm that "Private education is absolutely crucial to the vitality of this nation and public policy should strengthen rather than diminish these essential institutions." When a concrete issue presents itself, however, the operational definition is controlling. Their *operational* definition of American education includes only government-provided or public education. According to Senator Moynihan, "The bureaucracy that would inexorably move from the Office of Education to the Department of Education is a bureaucracy devoted to the demise of [church] schools." These schools fall outside their operational definition of American education.

The issues raised in the Paradis letter are significant, indeed deserving more attention than they receive. And yet, given the political realities the USCC statement recognizes, the question must be asked, "Was this approach, opposition to the new cabinet post, the most effective way to raise these issues?" Might it have been better, for example, to have supported the new department, arguing for provisions in the legislation that would provide non-public schools with effective representation? Win or lose, this would have raised the same issues but perhaps in a more constructive context.

NO NEWS IS BAD NEWS

PRESS

Free at last! O Lord, from the tyranny of the quotidian! No newspapers! There's something bracing in the prospect of a long strike and a forced withdrawal from addiction to the news. The world has been too much with me; here's a chance to unclutter my mind and face life direct, with an eye to what's immediately at hand. I've driven through blizzards, even dug my way out of snowdrifts, just to get a copy of the Sunday *New York Times*. And why? I might plead habit, but it isn't habit. The addiction has a stronger grip than that. I'm afraid I'll miss something.

Miss what? you might ask. The winner of the ninth race at Saratoga? A picture of Carter on the Colorado? An episode in John Leonard's private life? The price of Kodak? A review of a book blaming imperialism on the nuclear family? The outcome of acoustical tests to determine if a fourth shot was fired at the scene of John F. Kennedy's murder in Dallas? My back's to the wall, but I can't answer. I can only say that for years I've had the feeling we're close to the edge of something, not the outer but the inner edge, and that I wake up

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in the morning wondering if today is the day it will announce itself.

Now this, I have come to think, is a bit nuts. Not the idea that something is waiting to happen—that is not surrendered so easily—but the idea it will fit into a newspaper headline, and the addiction to news which seems to follow. Other people have no doubt acquired the habit in a different way, but the result is pretty much the same: a compulsive regularity in the reading of newspapers which is hard to explain by either pleasure or utility. For the brutal fact is that most of what appears in newspapers does not measure very high as literature, and does not tell us anything we really need to know. It's like California jug wine, a bland version of the real thing.

Of course it's easy to be tough on newspapers. All one need do is to take them seriously. The fine writing is rarely more than a string of adjectives; the reporting is mostly elementary, like a description of an elephant which begins with the number of its legs; and the analysis is bloated with the jargon of the day. The higher we set our standards, borrowed from nobler genres, the worse the product looks. But there's something irritating and highfalutin' in this approach, like remarking with a sniff that the Rolling Stones are pretty thin stuff, next to Bach. Journalists are an unpretentious breed, on the whole—we might cite an exception or two on the editorial pages—and it would be ill-tempered to tax them with failing to see through to the heart of things, when all they have intended is a fair and honest piece of work, within the limits of the day. This very easiness, in fact, is one of the charms of newspapers. They take the world to be an interesting place, and, like people with a gift for conversation, have always got a story to relate, or an odd fact picked up somewhere, or a bit of practical advice, or a sound instinct that something bears watching.

Still, even taking newspapers for what they are, there's something about them which gets to you after awhile. For one thing, they're tireless. They cannot surrender the world for a day. Christmas and the 4th of July are days like any other; the newspapers are tugging at our sleeves with reports of fire and flood, the doings of great men, the plight of the snail darter, estimates of the Russian wheat crop, old scores being settled by the Palestinians, the torn ligaments of athletes, a recipe for turkey stuffing. We may learn to live with the fact that the affairs of men are never done; we arrive in the middle of the story as children, and leave in the middle as decrepits. But must we accept that the quest for a new restaurant is endless, too? Is there to be no end to instruction in the care of houseplants? Cannot the Home Improvement Page tell us once and for all how to fix a leaky faucet, and then drop the subject forever? How can the sexual revolution be a revolution, if the old morality is never discarded, and the new never wins the day? I can accept the idea that the Middle Eastern Problem is a fact of nature, like the law of gravity, with no prospect of repeal. But is nothing else ever to be done with? Is it all to go on forever—not just the energy crisis and the quest for the Presidency, but the rise of the Sunbelt, the decline of the Republican Party, the genesis of religious cults in Southern California, inflation, new ideas for loft beds, the influence of violence on television, tremors along the San Andreas fault, the return of the peasant blouse, strange lights in the sky, poisoned candy at Hallowe'en, the spread of the singles bar? Must we submit to it all as permanent aspects of the human condition, like the heartbreak of psoriasis? The spirit rebels against the relentless resurgence of the same old thing, masquerading as something new.

The tirelessness of newspapers is bad enough. Even worse is their repetitiveness, which sounds like but is not quite the same thing. After you've been reading the papers for awhile you begin to notice cyclic patterns. Least welcome is the Presidential Election. I do not mean the vote itself; this is not an argument for monarchy. But sometime in the first six months of an administration a story appears weighing the incumbent's chance for re-election. The mid-term Congressional elections bring a flood of them, which never ebbs till the ballots are counted. We are already approaching the middle of this ordeal right now, and if it were not for the newspaper strike, would be reading about a dozen possible Republican opponents of Mr. Carter in 1980, some with prospects so remote not even they take them seriously.

Other cycles are almost as onerous: the Middle Eastern Negotiating Story, for example, which follows a pattern as immutable as an A-B-A-B rhyme scheme. Or the Hurricane Story, which builds quickly from the first sighting of the hurricane, reaches a crescendo as the storm hits and the first casualty reports come in, signs off lingeringly at the end with Aftermath Stories of rebuilding and the creaky workings of government disaster relief. This is closely related to the Oil Spill Story. We seem to have left the Long Hot Summer Story behind, but Watergate has given us a host of lesser scandal stories which begin with discovery of malfeasance, and then quickly shift focus to those in government who ought to have known but claim they didn't. Finally there is the Strike Story, infuriating for its opacity where the exact bone of contention is concerned, and dull because the secrecy of negotiations is so rarely penetrated. The only thing tougher than reading Strike Stories, is covering them. All of these stories come around with regularity, but none of the bracing promise, of the change of seasons, and we read them—or at least I read them—with a sinking heart.

I am deliberately refraining here from speaking of all those things about newspapers which ought to be,

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and even might be, better than they are; and of the sheer awfulness of so much of what happens in the world. Focus on the one turns us into collaborators, and suggests we pay even closer attention to newspapers than we do already, while the other simply oppresses the spirit and makes us wonder if there is anything to be done, not about "problems," but about us. Those are separate subjects. What I am thinking about here is the nagging sense I get, and which I suspect others get, that in reading newspapers we are wasting our time. Ninety-nine percent of what appears in them does not properly or necessarily concern us, and often does not concern anybody at all. It is just there. About the subjects that matter there is generally nothing we can do. Nobody has appointed me to keep an eye on foreign policy, or to decide what sort of logging practices to allow in national forests, or to find kidnap victims. I don't really care what's the best restaurant in Soho. I'm sorry homosexuals find life so tough, but have to confess I do not think seriously about their problem. We can't all maintain an identical pitch of concern about absolutely everything. Newspapers spread us thin. Better to read books, care about one or two things, think deeper and more steadily on those matters we might do something about, pay attention to the life which is truly at hand, and let the cluttering distractions of the world go hang.

Or so I felt when the strike began. And why not? I might worry about the strike all I liked, without shortening it by a day. For a week I contented myself with a glance at the headlines of the *Rutland Herald* or the *Boston Globe*, figuring that would keep me abreast of things if San Francisco should finally slide into the Pacific. For a week, it worked fine. Instead of the *Times*, with my morning coffee I read the memoirs of Harriette Wilson, the witty mistress of a great many peers, including the Duke of Wellington, in Regency London. I cannot describe it as exactly an improving book, but for sheer interest it certainly rivaled the doings of New York and Washington, and for the first time I learned what happened to those young girls in Jane Austen novels, who ran off with military officers. (A quick if busy youth, and a long, impoverished dotage, for those too sentimental to exact the last pound from their lovers.) I read Ben Hecht's *Guide for the Bedeviled*, in which the author discovered he was a Jew after the first reports of concentration camps began to emerge from Germany in 1943. A biography of Bramwell Brontë is next in line. And this is all sheer profit, books I wouldn't have read if there had been no strike. After a week into the strike I allowed myself to think I wouldn't care if it were never settled.

Perhaps I was only whistling Dixie; or it may have been sheer relief at a break in dogged routine, a kind of vacation. But eventually a small incident reminded me what it is that newspapers are supposed to do, the one thing, half-obscured by the bridge columns and mood pieces and articles about the conversion of old barns into weekend homes, which nothing else does half so well. Even the most slovenly and distracted newspaper keeps half an eye out for what they're doing to us. In this instance they had done it first to Myron Farber of the *New York Times*, a reporter threatened with jail in New Jersey for refusing to surrender his notes to the judge in a murder trial. That was where the story slipped from my mind.

Then I glanced at the front page of the *Rutland Herald* one morning and noticed that a New Jersey court had ordered his release from jail, pending an appeal, after 26 days. . . . *Twenty-six days.* This was not the inner edge of what I have been expecting, nor even anything of the general sort, but it was most unmistakably something which bore watching. Twenty-six days is a long time to spend in jail defending an important principle, better hidden by a newspaper blackout, than by prison walls. It reminded me of something I heard first in the 1960s: you may not be interested in politics, but politics is interested in you. It is not the newspapers that have been tugging at our sleeves, when we wanted to be about our own business, but the world itself, and we neglect it at our peril.

THOMAS POWERS

TESTED METTLE

THE SCREEN

For years Woody Allen has made comedies out of the same neuroses, anxiety and despair which are found in Ingmar Bergman's films. Now, with *Interiors*, Allen has made a film that Bergman might almost have made himself. Allen has made a film which is perhaps even better than the film Bergman might have made from the same material, for while Allen is less powerful as an artist, he may also be more human. Indeed, with material of this sort, maybe it is in the end an advantage not to have quite so all-encompassing a formal and aesthetic vision as Bergman would. The experiences that both directors try to deal with—emotional experiences that have no objective content, experiences that are purely, as Allen's title says, "interior"—are so elusive that the more tentative art with which Allen approaches them comes nearer the truth than does the completeness, the aesthetic elaboration, of a Bergman film. Certainly *Interiors* is a film that works as drama at least as well and painfully s Bergman's *Scenes from a Marriage* did.

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Interiors ends in a situation very like the ending of *Scenes*, in fact (or like the ending of O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*, which also has its obvious affinities with Bergman). The central characters are together, yet utterly alone, in a dark house in the middle of the night. The house, which is on the beach in the Hamptons, belongs to Arthur (E.G. Marshall), a wealthy lawyer who has recently left his wife Eve (Geraldine Page). On this particular night he has remarried, with his daughters and their husbands in attendance. After everyone else has gone to bed, the one daughter still up, Joey (Mary Beth Hurt), thinks she sees Eve, who was of course not invited, standing in the shadows on the veranda. From the unlighted sitting room, Joey begins to speak to her mother outside. But Allen never shows us the two of them in the same shot. Eve doesn't speak; and when we do see her, it looks as if Joey isn't there at all, inside the doors where we thought she was. Is Joey only imagining her mother to be present, and in reality talking to herself? Or is it she who is the figment of Eve's imagination?

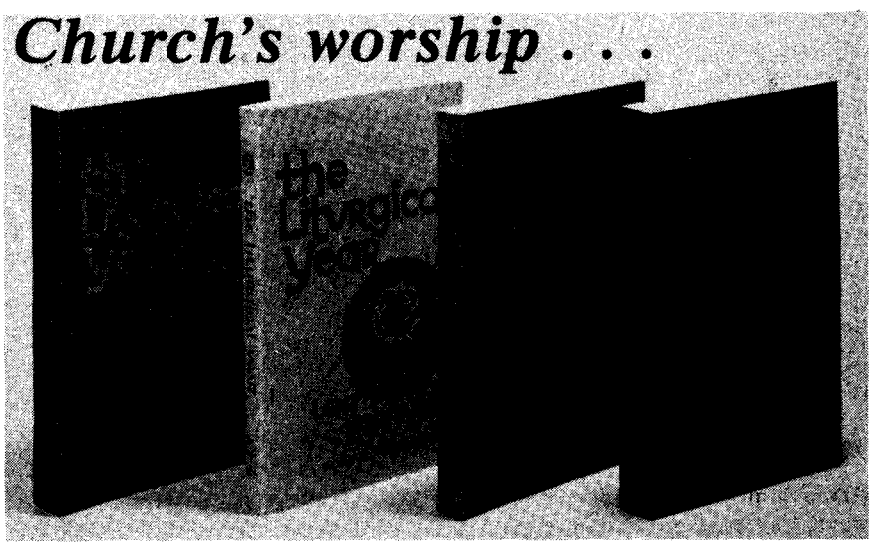
This evanescence of the characters, as if each existed only inside the head of another, is hinted at again a few minutes later. When one member of the family attempts suicide, another nearly dies in the rescue effort. And while all this is going on out on the beach, Allen at two points cuts back to the remaining members of the family asleep in their beds inside. At the moment when the would-be rescuer is herself being revived, Arthur and the two daughters still in their beds stir into wakefulness briefly, emerging from sleep as those outside do from the ocean—as if the sea of troubles in which the family is really drowning is its own sleep and dreams. The implication here is that the emotional connections among them are almost physiological. Their conflicts with each other are like the conflicted feelings inside some one person. What makes this moment effective is that it is only a moment. It is only a fleeting glimpse of what lies beyond all explanation here, a whiff of the power feelings can have greater than even the suicide suggests. The sleepers don't come fully awake with some hokey premonition. They bestir themselves for the instant, and then lapse back into sleep. It is the momentariness of this crystallization of their feelings, its briefness and faintness, which makes it affecting.

The effectiveness of this moment derives, too, from the fact that Allen has been making the suggestion contained in it all through the film, but making it always just as slightly and unobtrusively as here. At the

A guide to the Church's worship . . .

The Liturgical Year

by Adrian Nocent, O.S.B.



NOT SINCE Parsch's *The Church's Year of Grace* or Gueranger's *L'annee Liturgique* has the liturgy been so completely, so intelligently plumbed for the values associated with an understanding of "the liturgical year."

While Vatican Council II has not changed those values as expressed by Parsch or Gueranger, it has altered the emphases. Nocent, a monk of the Abbey of Maredsous, France, examines each of the four "seasons" of the liturgical year from the viewpoint of structure and themes, highlighting the simple unity underlying the diversity of the Church's worship.

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heart of this film is the notion that a woman's children, having come literally from inside her body, remain in their emotions the visible interior of their mother. While Renata (Diane Keaton) is asleep in bed during the suicide attempt, earlier she was out on the beach alone, staring miserably at the waves as if *she* might drown herself. The truth is that the attempt of one member of the family to kill herself is a composite of the actions and reactions of all the other members. Everything that happens in the film has this tenuous web of connectedness to it.

The only symbolization that the human condition gets here is so close to being literal, and not displaced or symbolic at all, that it is a note as lightly played as the others I've beeen talking about. I am referring to the fact that the interiors in this movie, besides being the interior experience of the characters, are the interiors of the rooms in which they live their lives. Eve is a decorator, and we are made acutely aware of the décor of all the exquisite rooms in which the film is set. Whenever anything goes wrong, Eve is likely to ask that the windows be closed because barely audible noises from the street outside are "unnerving." Then, the first time she tries to kill herself, Allen opens the scene with close-ups of her hands as they tape the windows shut before turning on the gas; and the sound of the tape being unreeled truly is unnerving—sharp and distinct and louder than life. It's a brilliant touch.

Again, though, what makes this movie compelling is the way Allen can use the same sort of material in a very low-key, almost incidental way. There is another scene in which Eve is riding in a car with Joey, and rolls up the window. That's the whole scene, just rolling up the window—a simple, natural gesture of self-immurement. It is in moments like this that the true, sustained quality of the film lies. Woody Allen is a remarkable man. He is a man who has tried a number of very radical ways to mediate feeling. He has been through psychoanalysis, which is one way, and he has been a nightclub monologist and director of schlock comedies, which are another way. These are both very rough ways to try to deal with feeling; yet Allen has come through them with an extraordinary sense of how obscure and precarious true feeling is. This is what, in *Interiors*, adds a whole new dimension to his career.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

BOOKS

A DISTASTE FOR CANT, AN EAR FOR PROSE

MARGARET WIMSATT

The Critic's Credentials: Essays and Reviews

STANLEY EDGAR HYMAN

Edited & With a Memoir by Phoebe Pettingell

Atheneum, $12.95 [325 pp.]

The Eye of the Story: Selected Essays and Reviews

EUDORA WELTY

Random House, $10 [355 pp.]

Two esteemed writers here present us with volumes related only generically: each is a collection of essays and reviews. Eudora Welty speaks for herself. Stanley Edgar Hyman died in 1970 at the age of fifty-one, and his wife Phoebe Pettingell has lovingly edited and introduced some of his uncollected pieces. Welty's real trade is fiction, so most of what she gives us is, though polished and often witty, in a sense off the cuff—odd musings, happy reflections—communication facilitated between her own favorite writers, and us, her favored listeners and readers. Her enthusiasm for both is delightful; seldom has a critic drawn her/his audience into such a warm dialogue of shared appreciation. Hyman is professorial. Many of these essays were written when he held down steady reviewing jobs, most of them for *The New Leader*. What the two share is a commitment to authors they admire, a distaste for cant, and an ear for English prose.

> *Writers are often asked to give their own analysis of some story they have published. I never saw, as reader or writer, that a finished story stood in need of any more from the author: for better or worse, there the story is. There is also the question of whether or not the author could provide the sort of analysis asked for. Story writing and critical analysis are indeed separate gifts, like spelling and playing the flute, and the same writer proficient in both has been doubly endowed. But even he can't rise and do both at the same time.*
>
> —The Eye of the Story

Miss Welty, the first citizen of Jackson, Mississippi, includes essays and reviews on stable authors, the staple of Eng. Lit. courses: Jane Austen, Chekov, Willa Cather, Katherine Anne Porter, Virginia Woolf among them, and, delightfully, a paean of praise for S.J. Perelman, whose early cartoons in the defunct magazine *Judge* she read concealed under the lid of her desk in high school Cicero class.

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Professor Hyman also deals with what might be considered classics: Mark Twain, Edgar Lee Masters, James Joyce, Sinclair Lewis. But he has more room than Welty has for oddballs and the currently popular, as: Nabokov, Richard Wright, John Updike, and (a light touch here!) Philip Roth. His long fourth part is about Third World writers, less familiar to many of us: Russian, Italian, German, and diverse African. It is interesting, and proper, that Miss Pettingell should have chosen "The Critic's Credentials" (1963) to head this book, and as its title. Hyman's requirements for the critic are formidable. He must be a modern Aristotle, up to date in all branches of knowledge, he must bridge the gap between Lord Snow's two cultures. He must be a polymath before attempting to practice his trade. Even the admiring reader may wonder if quite this much knowledge is required before we attempt judgment—though we know what he is reacting against, we wonder: what mountain? what mouse? is it better to be wide as a church door? or deep as a well?

These two books have one sure thing in common. Each has a fine last section, dessert after the meal. Hyman's lifelong interest in myth and ritual is here turned to, tuned in on, Darwin, Freud, and Jessie Weston, that early-liberated lady who changed her mind about faerieland several times, and whose last set of opinions is familiar to readers of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*.

And in "Illumination for the Unchurched" and "History and Sacred History" (both late pieces, 1970) he displays a loving and minute knowledge of the Bible, both Testaments, that would put many a Rabbi or Jesuit to shame. He is hard on modern translators, preferring King James with all its blesséd ambiguities, and very hard on archaeologists who, finding fishhooks near the shore of the Sea of Galilee, conclude that they have found St. Peter's house. "As faith has decayed in our day, the Euhemerist passion for pseudohistory has increased. . . . Is there then, no real history connected with the Bible? Of course there is. The Jews and Christians who believed, and *what* they believed and practiced, are real history, not the doings of their divinities." One wishes Mr. Hyman had lived to complete his "critical study of Bible Scholarship. . . . Had he lived longer, perhaps he might . . . have ended where his grandfather began as a student of *Torah*."

Eudora Welty's book ends with per-

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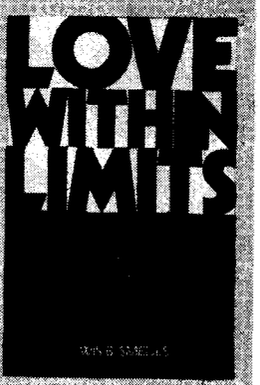

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sonal pieces set in the Mississippi of her younger days, local colorism of a high order, literary imagination looking back and re-peopling the past, whether the Natchez Trace, the lost towns under the river bluffs, the corner store of her childhood, or Ida M'Toy's second-hand clothes shop. They are not failed fiction—rather, fiction in the making. Delightful to read, they illuminate for us the shaping of a novelist's sensibility, the mind behind the eye of the story.

On Genesis: A New Reading

BRUCE VAWTER

Doubleday, $10 [501 pp.]

JOSEPH BLENKINSOPP

The subtitle of this book may prove to be initially misleading. It does not signal a new departure in interpretation but alludes to an earlier study of the author under the title *A Path through Genesis* published in 1956. That was just thirteen years after the encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu* gave the green light, or at least a flashing red light, to Catholic exegetes, and six years after *Humani Generis* which offered instruction on such matters as evolution and the historicity of biblical narrative; a time, in other words, when for Catholics Genesis conjured up debates about myth and history, the propriety of acknowledging literary forms in the Bible, monogenism versus polygenism, and the like. Coming when it did, Vawter's book provided welcome guidance together with John L. McKenzie's *The Two-Edged Sword* which appeared in the same year.

As Vawter notes in his Preface, it was clearly out of the question simply to revise the book to incorporate the results of scholarship on Genesis over the intervening twenty years or so. By now Catholics have joined the mainstream of academic biblical studies and most no longer consider it necessary to expend their energies mediating between scholarly hypothesis and the somewhat oracular utterances of the Pontifical Biblical Commission. *On Genesis,* then, presents a straightforward commentary on the first book of the Bible based on the New American version, dividing it into Origins (chapters 1-11), the Saga of Abraham (12-25), the Saga of Jacob (25-36) and the Story of Joseph (37-50).

In a brief introduction Vawter defends his adoption of the classical documentary hypothesis, which received its definitive formulation exactly one hundred years ago in Wellhausen's *Prolegomena,* but offers little comment on recent studies which question the critical orthodoxy and suggest alternative models. The value of his work lies primarily in his ability to synthesize mainline exegetical opinion and present the results in a clear, non-technical way free of scholarly jargon. While this may prove to be too blandly irenic for professional biblical scholars, it should be valuable to the lay reader prepared to work

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through the book of Genesis at the author's rather leisurely pace. Among commentaries of comparable length it stands somewhere between Speiser's Anchor Bible volume which is strong on background information and von Rad's contribution to the Old Testament Library series which is strongly theological. Ideally one would consult all three which, taken together, provide a judicious blend of Jewish, Catholic and Lutheran perspectives.

It will not escape the alert reader that in several respects Genesis is at the roots of the political conflict in the Middle East today. The patriarchal histories are concerned with the destinies of the Arab as well as the Jewish branches of the Semitic peoples, and Vawter is correct in detecting an ecumenical intent in the way the story is told. He gives less importance, however, to the land of Israel as an organizing theme in the Pentateuch as a whole, the promise to the ancestors as legitimating the conquest of a later day, the elegant introduction of the theme of delay in honoring the promise by means of which the connection is made, and the function of the laws as specifying the conditions under which the land might be securely held. Genesis is, after all, only the first part of a larger literary corpus which came to be divided into five books under circumstances as yet inadequately explained. Most scholars, Vawter among them, assume a horizontal division into sources or traditions (the JEDP of the documentary hypothesis) rather than a vertical division into independent books. It is surprising, therefore, how seldom commentators take seriously the organizing and structuring principles in the work as a whole as they set about explaining individual passages. If this is a criticism, it is addressed not so much to Vawter as to the current manner of writing commentaries in general. In no way does it detract from the value of a work which combines up-to-date scholarship with clarity and readability.

The Public Man

GLEN CAUDILL DEALY

U. of Massachusetts, $10 [128 pp.]

GARY MacEOIN

Way back when all wisdom snuggled comfortably in a couple of dozen Scholastic tags, I learned that nihil probat qui nimis probat. The phrase insisted on recurring as I read this slender (128 pp.) but fascinating study subititled "an interpretation of Latin American and other Catholic countries."

Even if few today believe that Max Weber and R. H. Tawney wrote the last words on the impact of Calvin on what has become popularly known as the Protestant ethic, these thinkers undoubtedly did contribute to an understanding of the complicated elements that coalesce in the capitalist mentality. The logical complement to their studies is a parallel or dialectical evaluation of the Catholic ethic, and that is the challenge Dealy has accepted or the temptation to which he has succumbed.

Grosso modo, I find his description of the Latin American male (the female is simply absent) clear, concise and accurate. This male—and for the moment we are talking about the tip

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of the iceberg—goes to the university to learn politics in action. He spends endless hours in coffee shops or clubs with friends. He comes late for appointments or skips them. He disdains manual work. He dissipates his wealth ostentatiously even if it means going without the necessities at home.

I also agree with Dealy that this life style is logical, certainly no less logical than the life style that expresses the spirit of capitalism. It is logical because it is calculated to achieve the goals that correspond to the values of Latin American male. For him, success means to be identified as a public man, to have a plethora of friends whose support he can command, to be identified in the community as wielding power.

The values of those on top inevitably percolate to all strata of society with which they have politico-economic contact. In consequence, in Latin America, the middle sectors and even the day laborers seek, mutatis mutandis, the same goals. To survive they need friends, and to make and keep friends they must exhibit as many as possible of the indices of those on top. The workman will carry his tools in a briefcase and wear a collar and tie on the bus. Though he must use his hands, he can rise a notch in the public gaze by having his shoes shined at a street stand.

How far down in Latin American society do these values trickle? I believe that at least half of the hemisphere's 400 million people are effectively untouched by them, because they live at a level where the only operative goal is survival.

Where Dealy loses me, however, is when he sees the "public man" as a product of a Catholic ethos and consequently identifiable as the dominant type in all countries "that have remained monolithically Catholic in culture since the Renaissance." He lists specifically Spain, Portugal, Italy, Latin America; and "to a lesser extent," Hungary, Ireland, France, French Canada, Austria, Romania and Poland.

That the Latin American man manipulated theology to buttress his value system, just as the capitalist man manipulated Calvin to buttress his, I do not question. Indeed, Richard Morse in his Introduction to *The Public Man* recognizes as much when he notes that the neo-Thomism of Suárez "was no mere residual legacy but was tailored to the political sociology of early modern Spain." Yet neither Morse nor Dealy sees that this obiter dictum alters radically the cause-effect relationship.

To me at least it makes more sense to see the "Protestant" virtues of hard work, frugality and the rest, as characteristic of the central, dominant capitalist countries; the "Catholic," "Islamic," "Hindu," "Buddhist," "Animistic" virtues of cultivating friends, getting drunk, passing the time, as characteristic of all precapitalist societies in which man did not have effective control of nature, and also of the dominated or peripheral countries of the capitalist world in which people's decisions are dictated by the dominant capitalist centers. Doctoral candidates in search of a dissertation subject are welcome. There is no copyright in ideas.

One of the benefits of the theology of liberation as practiced by Catholics and Protestants in common is that it starts from existential reality, as opposed to the older approach from assumption into which reality is squeezed. And while theology is hardly Dealy's forte, such as he exhibits is of the old style. And his Scripture exegesis is of a piece. How can he imagine that the first Christians, who died because "we must obey God rather than man," regarded "a policy of obedience, if not subservience, to civil authority as a religious obligation"?

He assures us, for example, that in Catholic countries public life lacks "virtues," whereas Protestant religious values remain pervasive even when a Protestant society has been secularized. He apparently never heard of Watergate. And he certainly has not followed the Anglo-American machination in Italy during and since World War II, now documented from official records in *Gli Americani in Italia* (Faenza and Fini; Feltrinelli, Milan, 1976).

It is true that some of the characteristics of the Irish peasant fit Dealy's construct. But the post-hoc argument is dangerous even here. The Irish peasant doesn't sleep late because he doesn't have the drive to work. He sleeps late because it takes to 11 a.m. for the night dew to evaporate and let him get to work with his field crops; and in summer he doesn't leave the fields until light fades at or after 10 p.m. And who is more deeply immersed in millennial Catholic culture than the industrious, frugal, self-reliant Polish peasant?

Had Dealy been less ambitious and confined himself to identifying the "public man" as characteristic of Latin American society, produced by its sociohistoric experience and legiti-

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mated—as the capitalist man has been—by sycophantic theologians, his book could help students to understand a phase of history that is near its end. But he misleads when he offers this type as distinctive of the Catholic vis-à-vis the Protestant. There is no longer a neat distinction in values between "a Catholic" and "a Protestant," least of all in Latin America. The radical gulf today is between the values shared by reactionary Catholics and Protestants, and those shared by progressive, future-seeking Catholics and Protestants. Doctoral candidates, here is real meat for your dissertations.

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The Tell Tale Heart: The Life and Works of Edgar Allan Poe

JULIAN SYMONS

Harper & Row, $10.50 [259 pp.]

JOHN FLUDAS

There have been many Edgar Allan Poes. His reputation, no less intriguing than his life, reflects a range of attitudes toward madness, alcoholism, poverty, creative genius and highly eccentric behavior. If the National Book Award had been offered in the puritanical America of his day, he would have been denied it. If he were living today, he might still be considered unfit for such polite recognition.

Here was a paradox, an elegant Romantic with all the studied civilities of a Southern Gentleman, and a writer of grotesque, alarming, sadistic tales. He married his cousin Virginia when she was 14, possibly 13, and he loved her chastely, perhaps because he was impotent, or perhaps he willfully repressed his sexuality. He was constantly and dismally poor, and he died in 1849 at the age of 40. As the kind of alcoholic who is undone by small amounts of drink, he was sometimes too drunk to read his poems to waiting audiences and failed to appear at the White House for a meeting with President Tyler. And in his last years, overtaken by delusions and bouts of wild behavior, he could no longer ward off the demons of madness.

Julian Symons, a poet and mystery writer—it was Poe who originated detective fiction—does not claim to present original research, drawing on a century of exhaustive Poe scholarship. Like the best biographers today, he keeps a smooth and cautious course between verifiable and plausible events. Poe has, in recent decades, inspired volumes of literary criticism and psychoanalytic scrutiny that are sometimes so energetic and ingenious that they spill into disbelief. Sensibly, Mr. Symons has resisted the extremes of interpretation, preferring to be suggestive rather than domestic. In his clear and straightforward narrative, he invites the reader to see connections between the heroines of his fiction, those pale, tormented creatures who are sometimes buried alive, and the mother who died when he was two, and the sickly, passive, madonna-like Virginia: he idealized them all.

Because he is wary of overinterpretation, Mr. Symons has recently been attacked in the *New York Times Book Review* for liking his Poe "unexamined." His critic is a Poe scholar, Daniel Hoffman, whose viewpoint Mr. Symons finds "too personal, too egotistical." Poe himself relished literary wars,, and as the biography makes clear, he fought them fiercely, even unfairly, and in his era they seemed far more vicious and colorful than in ours.

In a series of separate chapters following the biography, Mr. Symons charts the jagged ups and downs of Poe's reputation and reviews both the critical stances toward the work and the "psychoanalytic approach" to the man, separating the strengths from the stupidities, as he perceives them. Agreeing with some insights in Marie Bonaparte's Freudian study of Poe from the 1930s, he writes that "Sadism and necrophilia are the motive power behind most of the powerful stories,

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and the repression of these instincts seems the most reasonable explanation of Poe's attitude toward sex." And this repression, possibly, explains Poe's obsession with horror, violence, decay, gloomy castles and crypts and vaults. This is not an "unexamined" biography.

Perhaps Mr. Symons, writing for "general readers" cannot satisfy the defensive specialists who understandably have career interests to protect. But they have, after all, given us many Poes, and Mr. Symons takes sides. I for one find that throughout his engaging biography, he is on the side of common sense.

IN BRIEF

TO DANCE, *by Valery Panov, with George Feifer, Knopf,* $15, [385 pp.]

Connections between art and ideology are always fascinating, and in the light of the souring detente between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. *To Dance* comes as a vivid, if grim, reminder that totalitarian systems seem virtually incompatible with most human or artistic rights. Valery Panov, of course, rose to stardom at Leningrad's august Kirov Ballet during the Sixties, chafed under state demands as he became aware of unbreachable limits on his and others' intellectual and creative lives, applied for the right to emigrate to Israel with his dancer wife Galya, and—after harassment by the KGB and other Soviet terror organs which led to an international outcry—finally made it out of Russia.

To Survive would have made an equally apt title for Panov's autobiography, for the story conveys poignantly one gifted man's efforts—subtle, forthright, devious, implacable—to stand up for his life as much as for his art. Inevitably, the book takes us from the young Panov's birth in White Russia just before World War II, through his adolescent years at the Ballet Academy in Leningrad when he trained with the country's greatest coaches, up to success and well-deserved fame as the *jeune premier* at the Kirov. The book's last quarter begins with casual reprimands, veiled threats; moves on to a chilling recapitulation of his denunciation by his own peers in dance ("Jew . . . animal . . . scum . . . Zionist fascists . . . bastard"), describes the good work done abroad in his behalf by such diverse types as Clive Barnes, Laurence Olivier, and John Cranko, and generally paints such a harrowing picture of abuse, attempted poisoning, prison, and blackmail that it's easy to forgive the "fairy-tale ending" coloration Panov gives to his and Galya's landing in Tel Aviv.

Along the way there are copious summaries of new roles essayed, teachers and friends gained and lost, artistic events weaving in and out of daily lives. Panov's writing (through and with Feifer) never rises above the level of a heartfelt translation, but the realities depicted are harsh and specific enough on their own. As with the late

The Bakke Case

ALLAN BAKKE was treated unequally but not unjustly in being excluded from medical school even if it could be shown that it was the minority program and not the glut of qualified applicants that did him in. To enter such schools today, many are qualified but few are chosen. Both qualification and selection are based on many factors and not just on fallible, limited and culturally biased testing systems. The goal of all preferential quotas is not the admission or the hiring of the unqualified but the goal is the ending of the systemic and unfair exclusion of persons from certain groups.

Many factors make you qualified. One's race or sex could add to one's qualifications, making for a richer mix of experience in the professional school and greater good for the community afterwards. It would provide role models to stimulate minority children, and in the case of medicine, it would provide minority doctors who are more likely to work in minority areas and to do research on special minority health problems. There can, of course, be no quotas for graduation. It would be a miscarriage of justice and truth to declare the incompetent competent. . . .

—Daniel C. Maguire, "Quotas, Unequal But Fair," *Commonweal,* October 14, 1977.

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O'Neill, sincerity and reportage transmuted through pain compensate for final artistry. It would be greedy to demand that Panov the dancer and human being be equalled by Panov the biographer.

STEVE LAWSON

THE URBAN UNIVERSITY IN AMERICA, *by Maurice R. Berube,* Greenwood Press, $7.50. [149 pp.]

What is an urban university? Ever since Chaucer wrote about the townie-gownie conflict, we have been questioning the university's role in society. According to this superbly researched, well written book, the American urban university is an ivory tower monument to the agrarian-Calvinist myth standing in the midst of America's worst problems.

If this seems too harsh an indictment, just look at the students' reading scores in the public schools closest to these institutions of so-called higher learning. They are among the worst.

Universities have usually been prep schools for privilege. A study conducted by Ora Reynolds in the mid 1920s showed that 28 percent of the students' fathers had attended college compared to 40 percent today. In the private schools in 1926, that study says, 47 percent of the Yale students, 55 percent of Washington and Lee students, and 68 percent of Williams students had parents who earned more than $10,000 a year, well above the poverty level even by the inflated standards of 1978.

The two notable exceptions to this history of exclusion were the Morrill Act which created the land-grant colleges around the time of the Civil War, and the GI Bill after World War II. Both of these movements required changing traditional admission standards and the creation of new curricula in order to serve new functions in society. The land-grant colleges were supposed to improve the lives of farmers through experimentation in agricultural technology. The GIs were entitled to some reward for a difficult job well done.

Maurice Berube documents the universities' failure to respond to the needs of black people from many different perspectives. He says early that the scarcity of opportunities fuels a false conflict over who is more equal. Berube then proceeds to cast doubt on several cherished but unproven educational assumptions.

The most widespread is that success in school is a means of economic advancement. Instead, Berube cites several studies which show that a good education is an effect of economic success, not a cause.

Berube's proposal for urban-grant universities overlooks the fact that there really are no private universities any more. Government grants combined with tax-exempt status mean that it is a rare university that doesn't get at least 50 percent of its operating revenue from the taxpayer, either directly or indirectly.

It should not be forgotten that a good education is a tool for enjoyment and a means of increasing human knowledge. Whether in the name of equality or excellence, no educational philosophy should ignore these non-quantifiable realities or allow its ideals, like states' rights in the South, to become code words propping up racial inequality.

JOSHUA LEINSDORF

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 611)

not, during that interesting session in the lounge. What I said was that during the Thirties and Forties, when I could speak with confidence, most of that leadership followed every twist and turn of Russian foreign policy, from being pro-Roosevelt before the Hitler-Stalin pact, to being so anti-Roosevelt during the Hitler-Stalin pact that they dumped James B. Carey as president, to being pro-Roosevelt again a few weeks later after Hitler attacked his former ally. I like to think that "historical truth" fits better than "McCarthyite extremes."

Mr. Hruby will have to speak for himself. I am not familiar with his publication, but Mr. Perlo has obviously failed to provide any evidence against him.

JOHN C. CORT

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